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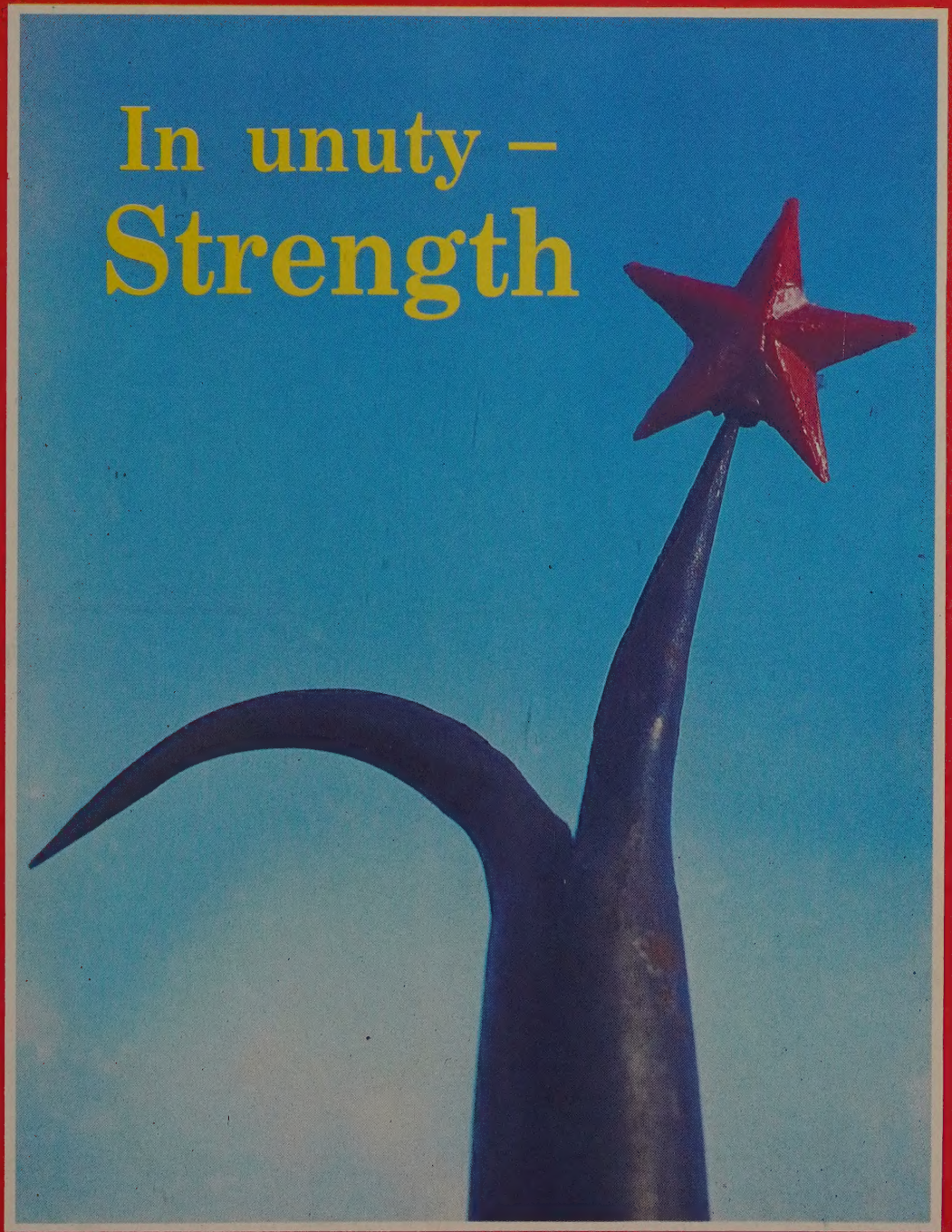

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NEW TIMES

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Founded 1945

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Cover by Victor Brel

After party battles

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From our mailbag

■ The decision of authorities in Prague to remove a monument – a tank erected in honor of the soldier-liberators – has prompted an angry protest in the Soviet Union, primarily among members of the Communist Party. But there are doubts about the sincerity of this anger, as such collective protests were often artificially organized.

Respected veterans of the Second World War and much less respected members of the Communist Party! Has it not occurred to you that that very tank which stood on the pedestal (and which now stands peacefully in a museum) and which, in your opinion, symbolizes the liberation of the Czecho-Slovakian land from fascism bears a striking resemblance to that which entered Prague in 1968 bringing not liberation, but death and disgrace? You say that you are insulted. But what about the feelings of those who were forced to resign themselves to the arguments of tank tracks running over the civil and national dignity of the Czechs and the Slovaks? It is impossible to ignore such feelings if our red-starred tank doesn't inspire love in the people who still remember clearly the events of **that** August.

But obviously it's not just a matter of someone's feelings. In the last year and a half many different kinds of symbols and idols have flown from pedestals in the countries of the "socialist community." Why were the residents of Prague so harshly criticized? Is it not because it was namely Czecho-Slovakia which strove for the removal of Soviet troops from its territory, which expressed its position about the events in Lithuania, and which became the initiator of the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact? It is this which has aroused the anger of our party-military nomenklatura, who in their turn through veterans and pensioners are trying to cast doubts on not only the decision of the people of Prague, but on the choice made by all the Czecho-Slovakian people.

G.Fiskovets
Novosibirsk Region, USSR

■ I received No.40/90 with great delay. Having read it, I decided to write about that which upset me.

I read very carefully the selection of letters from the labor camp and I examined the photograph which depicted women prisoners walking in file. My heart was suddenly

Soviet foreign policy – success or defeat?

■ Scientists, public figures, and journalists taking part in the work of the Soviet Committee for European Security and Cooperation asked me to share with the readers of *New Times* some opinions about the discourse in our country on Soviet foreign policy.

Even if some part of our society does not accept the ideas of radical restructuring of domestic and foreign policies and doubts the effectiveness of the latter, sharing these doubts could be not a denunciation, but rather a constructive dialogue. Otherwise the opinion can be formed that the criticism of the USSR's foreign policy only pursues the goal of discrediting the course of democratization and intensifying the discord which exists in society about the question of domestic policy. After all, the ideas of the new thinking in foreign policy are confirmed by the constitution, approved by the decisions of the Congresses of People's Deputies, and reflected in the series of agreements which have been ratified by the supreme legislative organs.

Representatives of the Soviet public taking part in the activities of the committee repeatedly expressed support for the recent agreements about the reduction of various kinds of arms and armed forces. They effected measures of public control over their execution an offered to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR to put into effect a social security program for Soviet citizens who are affected by the reductions. Our committee and our foreign partners participated in the actions of humanitarian aid.

Of course, not all problems are solved. Although the West is conducting its own restructuring in the military sphere, there still exists a desire to maintain the structures created during the Cold War years – most notably NATO (at the very moment that the Warsaw Pact has ceased to exist), they refuse to acknowledge and liquidate NATO superiority in certain types of armaments. We share anxiety with many of our people in connection with this. Especially under these circumstances, incompetent criticism of the USSR's foreign policy can, in our view, only encourage the supporters of the Western policies from a position of strength, and harm the negotiations on arms reductions.

Not all in this country were able to acknowledge the changes in Eastern and Central Europe from the position accepted in our country of the principle of a nation's freedom to choose its own path. We think that new relations with our neighbors will bear fruit only if we were the first (as a great state, not as an empire) to display, instead of a show of force, examples of goodwill and equal rights in political and economic cooperation. It is from this position that we look upon the unification of Germany.

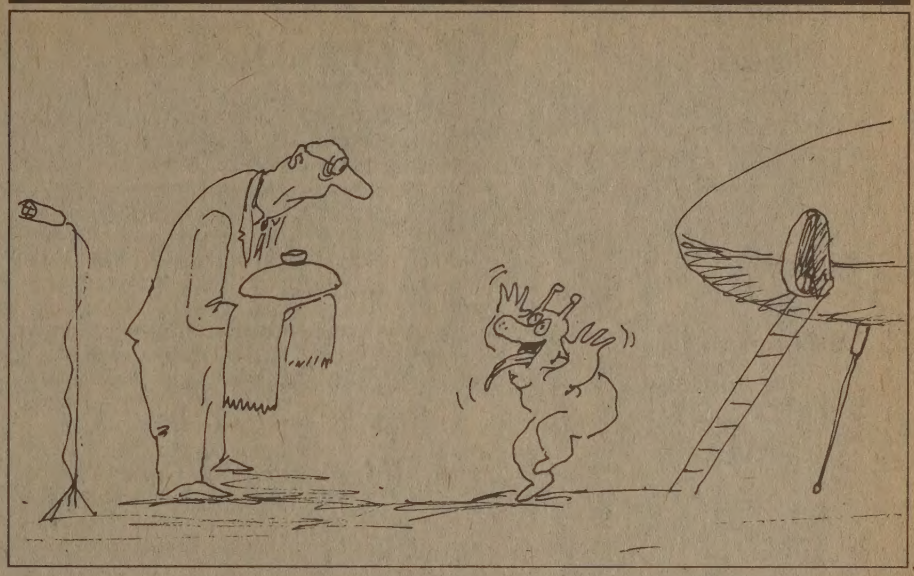
The present foreign policy course, we are convinced, is much more just and civilized than at any time in the past, it answers the fundamental interests of the people. The effectiveness of its subsequent translation into life greatly depends on the constructive contribution of the various political and societal forces of the country.

E.Silin,
Deputy Chairman of the Soviet Committee for European Security and Cooperation

Tanks folling down from the pedestals...

A riot in a women's labor camp

Clip the wings of hooligans!



Drawing by Victor Bogorad

sick. My mother wears such a uniform. She was arrested in 1983. The investigation was conducted in the best tradition of the 1930s. Having arrived to see my mother in the camp, I saw that she had two scars on her face and that her left hand had been bandaged. She evaded my questions, answering, "You'll grow up and you'll understand. You can't fight alone." I have grown up and I have come to understand a lot. In spite of the fact that she had been arrested for the first time, in the camp they put her in the brigade of recidivists. Within half a year, on false information, they placed her for 15 days in the penalty isolation cell, without even trying to determine whether or not she was guilty. Protesting against arbitrary rule, my mother began a hunger strike, sitting for 15 days on the cement floor of the isolation cell in a torn cotton garment with only slippers on her bare feet. This was in December. The window was broken. She emerged from the isolation cell ill. Later the boss said, "There was a mistake, but let that be a lesson to you."

Living and working among the recidivists, my mother witnessed some wild beatings. Usually the entire brigade would throw themselves at one or another of the women and cruelly kick her, having thrown the victim on floor of the toilet. A newcomer was beaten because she could not fulfill the norm for production, which exceeded by 2 or 3 times the norm outside of the camps. Mama related how once two women were not only beaten, but had their heads dipped in filth. Fear, malice, beating of each other – can this really be called reform? Every day of the week there were 12 hours of work, strict punishment for those who didn't meet the production norm, lynching by the recidivists of the newcomers, all secretly encouraged by the authorities – all this led to a riot in the camp. They called in troops armed with truncheons and nerve gas. All this against desperate and unarmed women!

Julia
18 years old

■ I am not in agreement with V.Zhitomirsky, author of the article *The man with the gun. (No. 5/91)*.

Over five years of service in various types of troops (1943–1948), I've been in several cities. In every one there was a military commandant's headquarters. In each city there were military patrols, even around the clock. Every squad consisted of three people, one of which was an officer or a sergeant. The patrol answered only to the military commandant's headquarters. It had the right to detain only people in military uniform, never a civilian. But the police did not have the right to detain the military. In my opinion, this order exists to this day. But now in any small city detachments are formed of fighters of various kinds, who often disguise themselves as military men, and the police don't have the right to detain them. For this reason I consider the decision that the military and civilians must act jointly and can detain all suspicious looking people to be a completely legal one. This will clip the wings of hooligans, pick-pockets, and drunks. In fact, even the democrats are reaching the same conclusion – Sobchak, for example. He introduced joint patrolling in Leningrad, although not in the central streets, but in the outskirts, on the commuter trains. And without armoured carriers.

M.Chugainov
veteran of war and labour
Khabarovsk Territory, USSR

■ For more than 20 years I have subscribed to your magazine. I was surprised by the gross mistake (or perhaps it was a forgery?) made in No. 20/91. On page 12 a photograph was published with the caption, "Some citizens of Tiraspol boycotted the Union referendum by burning their ballot papers."

Tiraspol did not boycott the referendum, and such a photograph is impossible. Our city voted almost 100 percent to preserve the Union.

G.Osheverov,
veteran of war and labour
Tiraspol, USSR

■ Current CC CPSU member, ex-dissident Roy Medvedev, has undergone an interesting metamorphosis. He called on people to vote not for practically the only recognized leader of the democratic forces, Boris Yeltsin, but for his Communist Party colleague Nikolai Ryzhkov, whom the country holds responsible for the decay of the nation's economy.

Roy Medvedev spoke on television and enumerated the basic qualities, which, in his opinion, a president must possess. If only he had stopped there. But he went further and categorically declared that namely the former prime minister possessed all these qualities.

This assertion was not supported by arguments and this doesn't become a historian.

What has happened with the People's Deputy Roy Medvedev?

Yegor Belyatsky,
engineer
Karaganda USSR

■ I entirely agree with the conclusion of the lawyer Ernst Orlovsky (No. 23/91): while the law about the organs of state security is not revised, all talk about a law-governed state is just empty words. But I have a question: is it possible in principle to revise a law while the KGB exists in its present state with its former qualities? From what I can judge, the KGB is the main support of the totalitarian system which presently exists in our country. It is namely because of this that perestroika is skidding, that radical economic reforms are foiled, and that compaigns are conducted which are directed against the democratic forces and which discredit its leaders.

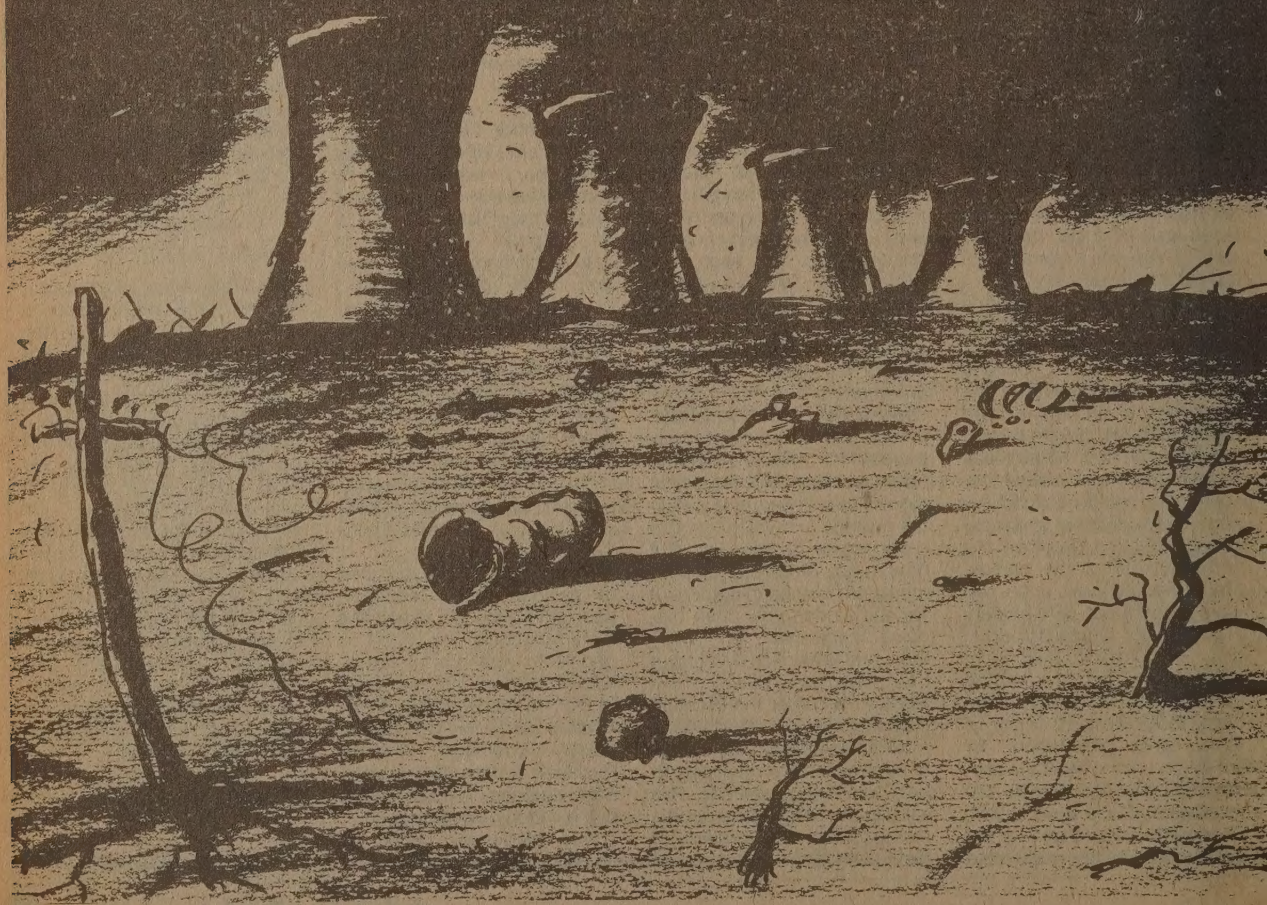
Arnold Anuchkin-Timofeyev
Moscow, USSR

***Compiled by* Tatiana Chernova**

POLITICAL LIFE

Not this time, comrades

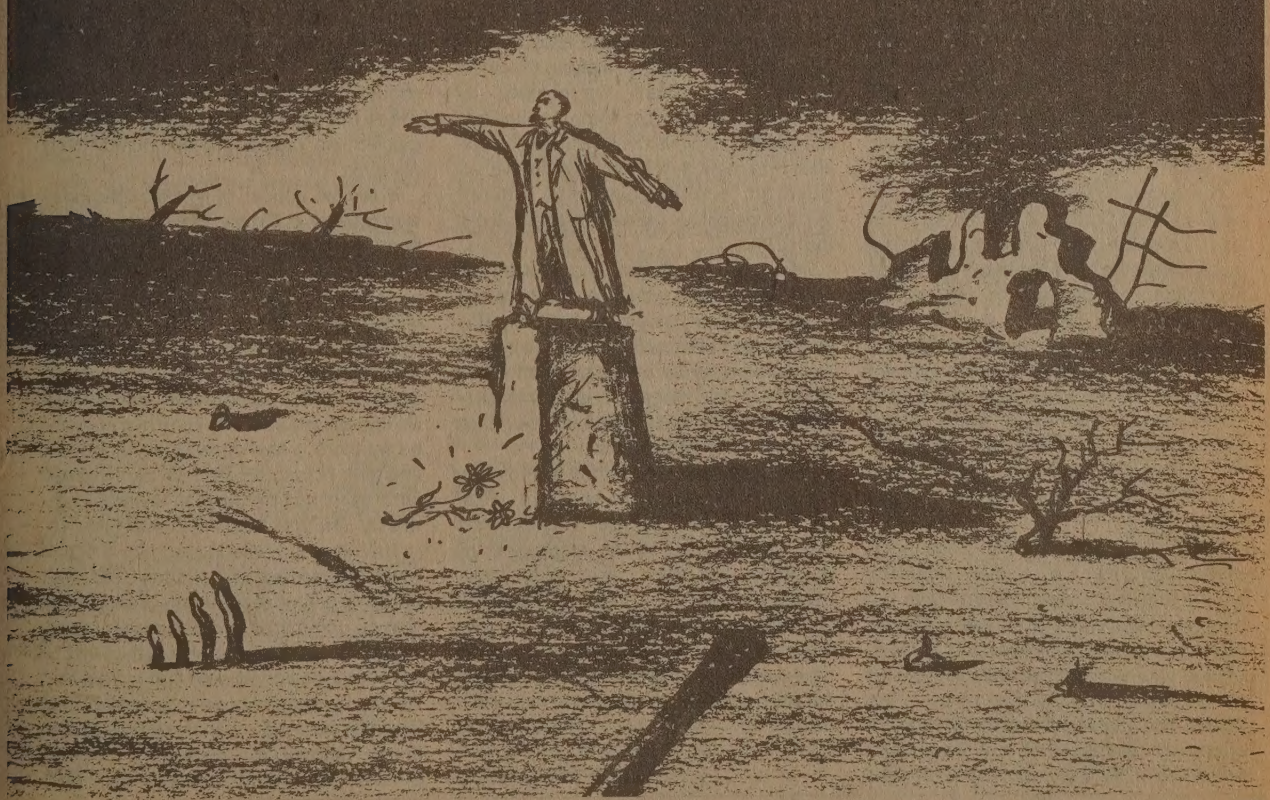
The fact that the plenum of the CPSU Central Committee has not resulted in a split in the Communist Party, as was expected, is the product of the General Secretary's tactical preponderance and the hard-liners' forced realism in the face of a possible catastrophe



The Yeltsin departification decree came shortly before the plenum. It made the General Secretary's life harder, but during the meeting at Gorbachev's out-of-town retreat of Novo-Ogaryovo Gorbachev did not reproach Yeltsin, evidently because the Yeltsin decree helped to remove the General Secretary from the line of fire from Communist fundamentalists.

The meeting with first secretaries of regional CPSU committees and central committees of republican Communist parties held on the eve of the plenum was Gorbachev's first victory. The hard-liners seem to have lost some of their critical fervor after the setbacks in the elections in Russia.
The concealed threat of the General Secretary's resignation, which would leave them alone to rescue themselves, took its effect.

Shortly before the plenum the conservative daily *Sovetskaya Rossiya* and the newspaper *Moskovskaya Pravda* carried a sinister address to the nation in which perestroika was called "a tragedy of an unprecedented magnitude." It can be assumed that Mikhail Gorbachev referred to *Sovetskaya Rossiya* which had caustically criticized Alexander Yakovlev, Eduard Shevardnadze and himself, when he said: "Naturally, party publications also enjoy the freedom of the press and are protected by the Law on the Press. They have a wide field for criticism and can be pluralistic, but if a newspaper is busy discrediting the party policy day in and day out, such a newspaper can hardly be viewed as belonging to the party press."



Representatives of the Moscow and Leningrad party organizations made their platforms public, as if showing the limits which the General Secretary and the party were not to transgress.

Actually, Gorbachev started the plenum by launching a counterattack and suggesting in his report that an extraordinary CPSU Congress be convened. The right-wing opposition's speculations about the necessity to convene an extraordinary party congress at which to call the General Secretary to task lost all meaning.

Both sides seemed to be satisfied with the delay.

In his report about the draft of the new party programme, Gorbachev went much farther than the preliminary programme theses and finally called a spade a spade. He said of the current crisis: "This is not the crisis of individual parts of the social organism, but the crisis of the model of barracks-type communism itself." The new party, the General Secretary stressed, must be the party of democratic reforms, human rights and constitutional elections. That is, the new party must become a different party. Several minutes of the Gorbachev report were devoted to highly positive references to the experience of social democracy. This made the hard-liners seeth with wrath.

Like in water polo, the struggle at the plenum went on underwater. The General Secretary's unprecedentedly bold report in which he suggested that the Communist Party die or reform itself did not evoke any visible reaction. The speakers pretended that Gorbachev had just read out the report of the commission charged with drafting the programme.

The routine was frustrated by Deputy Head of the CC International Department Andrey Grachev. Said he: "Do not let us pretend that we have not heard the report and failed to understand to what extent the CPSU must become a qualitatively new party to meet the challenges of the end of the 20th century." He also caused "an uproar in the audience" (a rare note in the minutes of the plenum) when he described the *Sovetskaya Rossiya* article as "an attempt to upset the fragile social consensus which has started to take shape recently."

An opposing opinion was voiced in the remarkable speech by Anatoly Lukyanov who in fact expressed solidarity with the notorious Manifesto of the Twelve. Democracy is in danger, Lukyanov said. It faces the threat of new totalitarianism cultivated by "pseudodemocrats" and "the pseudodemocratic press." The Soviets are under vicious attack and anti-Communist hysteria is on the rise and in some places it "has acquired the character of official policy"... Lukyanov concluded, rather too bluntly, that under these conditions the President and the party need each other and must support each other. The Lukyanov speech was a transparent hint that the President had shielded the CPSU structures from popular indignation and the legislative offensive.

The further discussion concerned smaller issues. For example, the Moscow party organizations demanded that the recognition of private property be removed from the programme and the programme itself be rewritten in "a more socialist way." The Moscow party organization wanted to see more words about communism and the protection of working people from the free market and reforms. Actually, it was an attempt to cripple the programme without entering into direct confrontation with the General Secretary. Characteristically, *Sovetskaya Rossiya* confined itself to publishing the speeches of Prokofyev of Moscow, Gidaspov of Leningrad, and Ilyin, No.2 figure in the Communist Party of Russia.

The party is becoming amorphous and increasingly Social Democratic, the speakers complained. "Weren't Marx and Lenin Social Democrats?" asked Otto Lacis, deputy editor-in-chief of the party's main theoretical journal *Kommunist*, touching off a wave of irritated murmur in the audience.

Prigarin, the rising star of the Communist Party of Russia, raised the question of immediate expulsion of opportunists and "renegades" from the party, implying Alexander Rutskoy's movement Communists for Democracy. On August 2 the "renegades" are going to convene the constituent conference of the new party which, they believe, will attract 3 to 4 million Communists in Russia (35 to 45 percent of the entire membership of the RCP).

Replying to this, Gorbachev noted that the first to be expelled would have to be the already formed factions including the Neo-Bolsheviks and the conservative Communist Initiative movement... The proposal of expulsion, which had allegedly been launched by 29 Central Committee members, was voted for by only nine participants...

The fundamentalists headed by Professor Sergeyev, who ran for vice-president in Russia in tandem with General Makashov and lost, tried to obscure the programme by suggesting that other variants of the programme (proposed by so-called "Marxists" and Nina Andreyeva supporters) be published as well. The whole plenum seems to have been the shaping of the front line before the final decisive attack postponed till autumn.

Gennady Ariyevich

A different party in a different country

Yeltsin helped Gorbachev once again, but the plenum was too furious to notice it

Leonid Ionin

The Communist Party has been the leading light in the Soviet political circus for the whole past week. The show started after the Communist Party received a bang on the head with Boris Yeltsin's departification decree. The president, who acts as the host of the show, did not interfere, although he expressed the unavoidable condolences. "He's got no right to do such a thing!" shouted communists. "The Yeltsin Decree sends the partocrats squaling," childishly giggled the radical pro-democracy daily *Kuranty*.

However, a touch of lyrical tragedy was also present in the show, as becomes the best examples of the comic genre. The Communist buffoon seemed to sincerely want to march into a brighter future, but his legs march in different directions: one goes right, the other goes left, and he's getting blows from all sides. So the buffoon sat down to reflect upon which direction his unruly legs would finally carry him in. While he sat there, a new show was announced: charging horses on the run, an acrobatic jump from the train heading towards community. The spectators held their breath.

The developments indeed lent a comic touch to the situation. While the CPSU was solemnly getting ready for the plenum of its Central Committee, thinking itself to be the ruling party and contemplating the ways of its furter evolution as one, it turned out that its fate had already been decided. It had been decided without the lengthy and tiresome debates in parliament, without bureaucratic routine, decided in a manner

Drawing by Andrei Bilzho

which left no room for doubt as to who is really in charge in Russia.

This sent communists agape. They claimed that the departification decree violated individual articles of the Constitution, international human rights accords, and they appealed to the Constitution Committee. Party organizations even found the texts of such documents and hired experts.

However, the experts prefferred to keep silent about the real motivation of the decree. They called it an attack on the Communist Party, while in effect it was a blow on the parallel state structure embodied in the pyramid of Party committees and bureaus. A blow on the unconstitutional structure which had imposed itself over the legitimate bodies of power and usurped the right to decision-making.

That is why the party experts' claims and appeals are the proverbial straws at which the drowning party is grasping. The implementation of the Yeltsin decree may be postponed, the Constitution Committee may make some amendments or changes in it, but there are no grounds to repeal it.

The presidential power has affirmed itself in Russia. Yeltsin is the ruler of Russia and he does not need any co-rulers.

The departification decree heralds the advent of a new, third model in Soviet political affairs. The first two models include the apparat type adhered to by the president of the Union and the populist one demonstrated by Yeltsin during his climb to the presidency. The former may be loosely described as the style of a rising power-thirsty politician in a young democracy.

The third model is the authoritarian one.

Lenin's teaching makes brains and hands strong

He who follows the Communists finds his way in life

Lenin's behest is always the best

("Folk" sayings from a 1956 book)

There is no point in discussing the pros and cons of authoritarian rule. In fact, authoritarian rule must be something bad. But on the other hand, it can be necessary and useful when the disintegrating fabric of the nation's social, economic and political life has to be pulled together. Fortunately, the authoritarian leader of Russia is not a Bolshevik or, to be more precise, does not belong to the camp of the advocates of the Bolshevist mentality. He emerged from the ranks of the Bolshevik party and became an opponent of the Communist ideology and practice. At the moment, Yeltsin the president is necessary for the cause of reform.

The authoritarian leader made a characteristically sweeping gesture when he issued the departification decree. For example, lawyers have pointed out the decree's approach to trade unions. According to the letter of the decree, it is the administration of a factory or a plant that will decide whether a trade union organization is needed in the premises at all. This provides a breeding ground for future conflicts and creates prerequisites for populist propaganda, this time resorted to by the Communists.

Following the letter of the decree, non-political associations and movements, ranging from the Red Cross to book lovers' societies, will be barred from work collectives. As for the ambiguous reservation that people's participation or non-participation in political parties or movements may not be the reason for curbing any rights, including the right to work "if the laws of the Russian Federation do not specify otherwise," it reads as an indirect warning that Berufsverbot may be later introduced. For Communists?

These are the small details which the opponents of the decree will try to capitalize on. Some corrections may be necessary, but the fact remains: the Communist Party, which lost its "leading role" de jure after Article 6 of the Soviet Constitution had been repealed, is now losing actual power which it administered through the omnipresent party committees. The CPSU has not been killed, and there has been no intention of the kind, but it has been knocked out and will hardly get up in its old form.

Ironically, the Yeltsin decree helped General Secretary Gorbachev check the Communist fundamentalists inside the CPSU. First, the Yeltsin decree made those who intended to level accusations of "treachery" and "renegadism" at the General Secretary forget their intentions in the same way a formidable external enemy makes a nation forget all internal squabbles. Second, which is more important, the Yeltsin decree provided the conditions which suit the manner of party activities specified in the draft programme of the party reform proposed by Mikhail Gorbachev.

Reading through the speeches made at the plenum one cannot fail to observe that only one speech is realistic – that of the General Secretary. The rest of the speeches traditionally appealed to the "leading role," "the class approach," "the genuine Marxist-Leninist world vision," and the necessity to regain "the lost positions." The authors of these calls rightly associate the draft Programme proposed to the Congress and Gorbachev's report with the Yuly Martov speech at the second Congress of the Russian Socio-Democratic Labour Party and Mensheviks – Social Democrats. While correctly stating the historical connection and continuity, they fail to understand that their leading role is lost for good, the lost positions will never be recovered, the class approach has been

discredited and Marxism has turned out to be an easy-going girl who would love anybody. Marxism got along well with Kautsky and Stalin, and today it is melting like wax in the skilful, experienced hands of the General Secretary.

Seriously speaking, there is no integral Marxism, but various political traditions more or less associated with it. These traditions include the Bolshevik trend and the Menshevik trend which is a variety of Social Democracy. It is not to me to judge which trend is more genuine. The circumstances of our history are such, however, that only reforms in the spirit of Menshevism and social democracy can breathe new life into the Communist Party, preserving it as a major political force.

Will such reforms be ever implemented? It looks like the answer will be positive. The promise of the final reformation is the joint efforts of Gorbachev and Yeltsin in transforming the nation's political life. The Communist Party will return to the basics, to the time of the RSDLP. The evolution of the CP will go even farther: getting rid of class fetishism and the relics of Bolshevism, it will evolve into a normal parliamentary party. If it pays special attention to social issues, it may become the ruling party one day. However, the party will never be the same again whatever name might be attached to it (Socio-Democratic, Socialist or Communist). The country will never be the same again, either. We must travel the way from barbarity towards civilization without vengeance or spite, victims and blood, pogroms and political repressions – in my opinion, this is what Mikhail Gorbachev's socialist choice is all about (in contrast to the socialist choice of his grandfather he once not too happily referred to).

However, it does not seem that the party has understood its General Secretary. It might have been unable to regain its breath after the blow of the Yeltsin decree, or it might have regarded the Gorbachevian reforms as too radical, but the plenum did not demonstrate any special reaction to either the decree or the Gorbachev programme. As far as one can judge from the released materials about the plenum, the plenum did not notice or understand the new situation in which the party will have to live. Most speeches were addressed to the realities of yesterday, or more accurately, to the realities of last week. It seemed that there was a silent agreement to meet for a final fight at the 29th Congress scheduled for this November-December.

The final fight may never take place, though. The fate of the party will be decided as an everyday problem along the two lines. On the one hand, the Russian administration will be consistently removing the party committees from "state bodies, institutions and organizations," liberating the rank-and-file communists – those who will elect delegates to the CPSU congress – from the burden of the party discipline. The experience of perestroika has already taught many to think and speak freely. Even the fleeting moment of the opportunity to think and to speak will emancipate the people. And the experience of freedom will make one choose freedom.

On the other hand, the authority and the apparat skills of the General Secretary, his ability to convince and to force to be convinced will hardly leave his opponents with as much as a chance by the time the congress convenes. This means that there will be no sensational final fight. As we have many times seen at party forums, the delegates will pour out their objections and accusations and then will obediently vote for the Gorbachevian programme of the party, with all the consequences. This will spell not the party's suicide, but rather its rebirth. The drab totalitarian toad will be miraculously transformed into the prince charming of democracy.

This is the positive scenario. Naturally, there are no guarantees that things will develop precisely in this way. Especially as there is direct opposition to Gorbachev's course, which includes the followers of Nina Andreyeva, the Communist Initiative, the Marxists-Leninists, the Marxist Party of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, etc. Such fundamentalist Communist factions are easily as numerous as the pro-democracy parties, groups and factions. They are breaking away from the Communist monolyth, because the monolyth itself is no longer what it used to be.

It is difficult to predict which fate they will face. Very Bolshevik-like, they are going against the grain, and if we take their programmes and rules as seriously as the Yeltsin decree, they are prepared to work underground. Anyway, they are not going to be removed from the work collectives. Two weeks ago the Council of Moscow Workers adopted a resolution which said they were going to start restoring Soviet power at enterprises. This seems to be a challenge to the procuracy of Russia.

At the beginning of this article I wrote that the Soviet political life reminded one of a circus show. This is not entirely correct. It is a farce played out strictly according to Karl Marx, after the tragedy. The characters are all here: the Russian ruler, the workers' movement, the splitting party, the compromise-minded Mensheviks, the die-hard Bolsheviks prepared to fight underground in order to galvanize what Lenin called the "living creativity of the masses." In a broader context, other historical parallels come to mind: the restive intellectuals, an upsurge of private enterprise, a government deaf to the woes of its people, the granting of freedoms, the parliament, unbridled social activity, the people's fascination with religion and things mysterious, even the slogan "All Power to the Soviets." We even have economic dislocation. The two similar situations belong to different epochs, but are episodes of one and the same historical drama.

The presence of such historical similarities can frighten some people as it did me until I understood that any farce must have a happy ending. This means that we will be OK. You've got Karl Marx's word for it.

New faces in the red faction

The old election law is still in force and the next plenum of the CPSU Central Committee will provide the federal parliament with some new legislators who don't have to attract the voters to get the parliamentary mandate. The current plenum nominated the candidates. Whom does the leading body of the CPSU regard as best suited for promoting Communist ideas, making laws and attracting the nation's sympathies?

Politburo member **Mikolas Burokevicius** found himself at the helm of the restored Communist Party of Lithuania after the absolute majority of the Lithuanian Communists supported the pro-independence course of the republican leadership. The new Communist Party of Lithuania is mostly composed of non-Lithuanians, but its first secretary is an ethnic Lithuanian. It is generally believed that Burokiavicius and his colleagues were behind the anonimous National Salvation Committee which provoked bloodshed in Vilnius last January.

The first secretary of the Lvov Regional Party Committee **Vyacheslav Sekretaryuk** wants to preserve the party organization in a region where the Communists have lost all influence. The Communist Party suffered an utter defeat in the elections across the Western Ukraine, but the first secretary is nonetheless optimistic: "Party committees at enterprises may be closed down, party organizations may be stripped of their property, one may dance the cancan on the ruins of party committees, but like religion, the Communist Party cannot be cancelled by decree."

Rein Urvas, the first secretary of one of the Tallinn district CPSU committees, is a professional Communist apparatchik and represents one of the three remaining parts of the Communist Party of Estonia. The faction he represents mostly includes Russian-speaking members and remains loyal to Moscow.

The last immortal dead

Soviet newspapers reported the death of Lazar Kaganovich referring to Western news agencies, as if the last member of Stalin's Old Guard belonged to another country's history, not ours

The Biblical advice for an undertaker is simple and attractive: Let the dead bury their dead. This seems to be a very good way out. The grace of late birth frees one from the necessity to take part in the funeral ritual, the declaration of the will of the deceased, and the sharing of the legacy.

In this particular case there is no need to ask the incongrous question: what legacy do we renounce? The bearer of the notorious name, Kaganovich, is now rejected by both followers and opponents.

The historical consilium does not inspire confidence. The case of doctors-murderers is not mentioned, of course. They never made an attempt at Kaganovich's life, to be sure. But the very date written in the death certificate is not clear enough. "Stalin died yesterday."

Stalin's cadaver, which was taken out of Lenin's Mausoleum thirty odd years ago, must have completely decayed by now. But is Stalin one with his earthly body? Where has Stalin gone?

What about Lazar Kaganovich? His case history contains the mention of his involvement in a Zionist plot with aggravating circumstances. People speak about that Zionist plot so credulously, as if they had seen it themselves. This is the case of the materialization of evil that baffles both Aryan and non-Aryan physicists. Does this mean that Lazar Kaganovich is still with us?

There were so few believers in metempsychosis that they were not even shot. The entire thinking was based on a rigid pattern: the departments of the Central Committee of the CPSU corresponded to ministries and directorates within the NKVD, Stalin's dreaded secret police. As the People's Commissar (minister) of Railways, Kaganovich worked hand in glove with the Transportation Directorate of the NKVD, signing the lists of people sentenced to be shot, and supplying the secret police with new names.

Said the *Pravda* obituary: Kaganovich occupied prominent positions in the CPSU and the Soviet state after the October revolution. At the same time *Izvestia*'s obituary described the deceased as Stalin's accomplice guilty of ... Obviously, the two papers spoke about the same person.

As a legitimately elected member of the Constituent Assembly, Lazar Kaganovich possessed a certain legitimate right to take part in the shaping of Russia's history. A reasonable society makes only the most competent of its citizens the shapers of its history. In the USSR this function was delegated to the secret police and Lazar Kaganovich, whose education consisted only of two years in school, became the right man in the right place.

Kaganovich and Stalin: a moment of happiness

The learned historians who are sitting down on Kaganovich's deathbed are so self-important! It is easy to predict their wise questions: "Who are you, Lazar Kaganovich?" A demon? The Kremlin's secret master? A butcher? An obedient servant? A mediocrity who wormed his way up to Olympus?

Kaganovich's rich biography provides illustrations for any moment of his life. A large audience enthusiastically chanting: "Long live Comrade Lazar Moiseyevich Kaganovich!" A sleepless night spent over the coded telegram to Moscow: "The secretary of the regional party committee must be arrested as an enemy of the people." The painful hours in the gloomy building of the Railways Ministry situated next to a station of the Moscow Metro still named after Kaganovich: the Boss stopped inviting Kaganovich to his out-of-town retreat.

Gerontologists are in error: why travel as far as the Caucasus to interview people who have lived to nearly one hundred years? Kaganovich is not the only one of the Old Guard who lived that long. His colleagues Molotov and Malenkov did not die young either. Work with no rest, sleepless nights, the Boss' capricious temper, the explusion from Olympus: these are the best means for preventing the illnesses which strike in old age. Prescription: to be taken internally if there are no contraindications such as conscience, honour, human dignity.

Lazar Kaganovich flew like a shooting star into another party committee or people's commissariat, sent a hundred people to the execution ground, and awarded another hundred with diplomas and inscribed wristwatches. People were treated as inanimate objects.

This method of treating people is not patented, but has a lot of enthusiastic followers: "He was so mad at me, I thought he would hit me in the face. He was the real boss..."

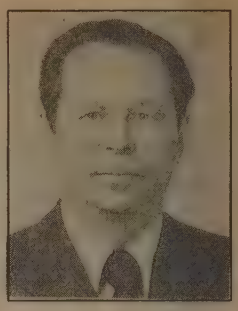
An optical illusion that is unknown to the students of nature: the faces looked so important on top of the Mausoleum and the gestures looked as if they had some deeper meaning. But examined at close range, these people are miserable and ridiculous figures. I must be saying words about the banality of evil, I must be saying that a clique of dull bureaucrats can kill millions. But these words will merely seem an explanation.

Lazar Kaganovich acted under orders. But whom would Stalin have given orders to, had it not been for Kaganovich? Malenkov? Molotov? Voroshilov? Won't it be necessary to name one hundred million more names to complete the list? No, no, no! No one wants to be on that list. A look around permits one to give out a sigh of relief: we are not monsters. Or we are not such bad monsters. We were tempted and we succumbed to temptation. We are not guilty.

"Lazar Kaganovich as the incarnation of evil." A good topic for a scientific paper. Kaganovich can't die. He must stay alive in order to testify to the others' being not guilty. Whom have we just buried? A very old man who had been known to play dominoes with other retirees outside his house on Moscow's Frunzenskaya Embankment.

Leonid Mlechin

Aeroflot remains the world's largest airline



Boris Panyukov,
Minister of Civil Aviation of the USSR, answers questions put by *New Times*

New Times. How is civil aviation going to switch over to free market relations?

Boris Panyukov. A free market must be created on the basis of competition between aviation companies and enterprises and through the formation of a new system of relations between republican and territorial civil aviation associations.

New aviation companies have been set up in Kamchatka, Lithuania, Bashkiria, the Tyumen and Arkhangelsk Regions, Armenia, Turkmenia, Tatarstan. They work on the basis of complete economic independence. New regional associations, concerns and corporations are being established in the Volga Region, the Far East, East and West Siberia, Azerbaijan, the Krasnoyarsk Territory, etc. Independent aviation companies are being formed outside the Aeroflot framework which will have the right to transport cargo on a commercial basis.

In the conditions of a free market economy enterprises and associations of civil aviation will work as independent carriers, possess the broadest economic freedom and be fully responsible for the results of their activities, flight safety and service.

NT. The switchover to free market relations is a question of time. How are you going to solve the existing problems in the current non-market conditions?

B.P. Many problems are objective ones. We lack aviation fuel resources, the most up-to-date aircraft like the Il-86, Tu-154M and Yak-42 are grounded because of a shortage of spare parts and engines.

As a result of this 25 million people have been unable to buy a ticket on domestic routes and 2 million people, on international routes.

A cardinal solution of this problem is only possible if new aircrafts are adopted by Aeroflot. The adoption of new, more advanced aircraft will allow us to increase air transportation volume by one and a half times. The programme of adoption of new aircraft such as the Il-96-300, Tu-204, Il-114, etc., initially scheduled for the end of the 1980s, is being implemented very slowly. We are going to start getting new aircraft within the next two or three years. And the completion of the programme will have to be delayed until after the year of 2000. We will need tens of billions of rubles in investments to complete the programme.

Civil aviation has been working on the complete self-financing principle since 1988. As a result of this year's reform of wholesale and retail prices the aviation fuel became three times as expensive, the price of serial aircraft went up by 50 to 100 percent, of new Soviet and imported types of aircraft by 2 to 5 times, and of spare parts, by 3 to 5 times. Is it possible for the branch to remain self-financing in such conditions?

NT. On April 2, 1991, the price of air tickets went up by 80 percent. Did it help solve your financial problems?

B.P. No, it did not. To buy new aircraft and to build ground facilities we need an additional 2 billion rubles. Local air routes are in an especially difficult situation. The Cabinet of Ministers of the USSR imposed limitations on the increase of the price of air tickets in the Far North, Siberia and the Far East. As a result, air companies are suffering losses and the number of unprofitable enterprises has increased. There is no mechanism of privileged taxation of air companies which charge low tariffs on either national or republican levels.

NT. What do you think should be done? How is Aeroflot going to become economically stable in these conditions?

B.P. Financial difficulties can only be overcome by liberalizing tariffs or granting state subsidies. Air companies must have greater rights, but at the same time the state must retain the control over the air transport. No less important is the process of denationalization and privatization which is expected to boost production, service quality, to facilitate the solution of social problems, to create a modern technological base. One of the ways to this is to attract foreign investments.

The Ministry of Civil Aviation and the Ministry of the Aircraft Industry have worked out a programme of the devolopment of civil aircraft. This programme has been approved by the USSR Supreme Soviet committees for transport, information sciences and communications, and for defence and state security. The programme takes into account many factors, including the process of conversion of the defence industries. It contains main guidelines of the R&D efforts to construct some 30 new types of aircraft. We are going to get the money to implement this programme from the federal budget, republican budgets, commercial banks and other sources.

NT. The Soviet Union used to be regarded as a country with highly developed aviation. Why is Aeroflot so short of modern aircraft now?

B.P. We have enough aircraft, and the total number of aircraft in operation may even exceed the number we actually need. What we do lack is world-class aircraft, which fly far, are comfortable, consume less fuel and can compete.

We need to get more Tu-154Ms and Yak-42Ds every year, we need speedier deliveries of Il-96-300s,

Tu-204s, Il-114s. We must start producing Yak-42 Ms, Tu-334s An-38s and An-218s.

NT. When do you think will Aeroflot become able to afford foreign-made aircraft?

B.P. We do not have enough hard currency, that is why the buying of aircraft abroad is out of the question in the immediate future. We have several long-term cooperation projects with foreign firms, though. We have concluded a contract with Airbus Industries on the lease of five A-300s. After the lease is paid for (in 10 to 12 years) all A-300s will become our property and will fly for another 10 to 15 years giving us pure profit. The first such plane is due to arrive this November.

NT. Quite recently Soviet society was shocked by a labour conflict in civil aviation. What did the pilots and air traffic controllers demand? How was this conflict settled?

B.P. Indeed, the social situation in the branch is difficult. It is a result of the economic difficulties which civil aviation is now living through. Housing is the gravest problem. Only 82.5 percent of our workers have adequate housing conditions. 298,000 workers of civil aviation and their families need better housing conditions and it is necessary to build about 150,000 flats for them. Alongside attracting state capital investments, we are taking efforts to develop private and cooperative housing construction. There have been some good examples in Yakutia, Tyumen, Byelorussia, the Far East.

The situation with crèches and kindergartens, health care facilities, leisure centres, etc. We are looking for money to satisfy the demands of our workers.

Now about the conflict. The work of pilots and air traffic controllers is physically, nervously and emotionally tiring; it requires high professionalism and excellent health. In the case of pilots it also involves risks. The trade unions of pilots and air traffic controllers believed that the salaries were inadecuate to the professional strain and put forward economic demands: a radical pay hike, better pensions, shorter hours, longer vacations.

Similar demands were put forward also by aviation technicians, ground control workers, air transportation service workers. That is why we mind this factor while negotiating with pilots and controllers. The negotiations were rather difficult and were attended by representatives of the government. Both sides displayed their willingness to end the conflict.

Our joint efforts resulted in the Cabinet Decree of May 17, 1991. The decree stipulated a pay hike of up to forty percent for ground workers and up to 50 percent for pilots and air traffic controllers.

The document helped solve almost any problems raised by the trade unions. We got a good foundation for starting to solve our urgent problems. However, the civil aviation enterprises must earn the money themselves. We have reserves, and hope that they will be backed with resources. Now we are working on the 1992 tariff contract in cooperation with trade unions and representatives of federal economic bodies.

NT. Thank you for this interesting interview.

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How to best express the people's will

Reflections on the failure of the congress of Russia's people's deputies to elect a new chairman of its parliament

Poel Karp

After the congress the democrats were reproached with failing once again to unite in the name of lofty aims while the opposite party demonstrated enviable solidarity. But even if all genuine democrats had voted for Khasbulatov (first deputy chairman of the parliament) he still woud not have gotten the majority needed for election. Divisions among the left refute the widely spread and erroneous view that there are only two camps and the dispute is between radical and moderate reformers, or between democrats and Communists.

At the congresses of people's deputies of the Russian Federation Khasbulatov held a middle-of-the-road stand. Thus it is worth considering why he still was not elected.

The people associate social change with political movements, their slogans, and their leaders. Only a few, even among politicians, are aware that in the final analysis the outcome often depends on the social and state system. It is the system which determines the true meaning of political slogans. Stalin committed his evil deeds not only because he was an immoral and wicked man but primarily because he combined in his hands immense power over the economy, the people, and their thoughts.

Politicians and citizens are discussing the need for strengthening executive power. They forget, however, that such action threatens with dictatorship. As for legislative or judicial power, it does not create such a threat no matter how much it is strengthened. The institution of the presidency in Russia was a natural reaction to the sharply increased central executive power, which now also discharges legislative functions.

No one thinks how the other structures of power in Russia – the Congress of People's Deputies and the parliament – should change as a result of this innovation. This question was not posed in the referendum. Now that Russia has a president, its parliament retains a leading body consisting of a chairman and three or even four deputy chairmen. The body was tolerated as long as the chairman of the bicameral parliament acted as head of state. Why retain it now that Russia, for the first time in its history, has a head of state elected by the people?

To justify special powers for the parliament's leading body, Sergei Baburin, one of the candidates to the post of chairman, referred even to James Madison, one of the founding fathers of American democracy, who justly pointed to the need for checks and balances in the state system. As a professional lawyer, Baburin should know that in the United States it is a task not of an anti-President' with immense powers but of the House of Representatives and the Senate. The two chambers meet separately and adopt separate decisions. They try to find mutually acceptable compromises only when it is really necessary. In this way the interests of all citizens, the States, and society as a whole can be taken into account.

The chambers of the Russian parliament – the Soviet of the Republic and the Soviet of Nationalities – usually act as a single mechanism. In this way they ignore the specific point of view from which each chamber ought to consider general problems. However, it is precisely for this purpose that a bicameral parliament was elected in Russia. Moreover, the artificially coalesced parliamentary machinery has a leading body common to its two chambers. Even before the President was elected, the leading body's independence of the two chambers belittled the role of the deputies. This made possible an anti-Yeltsin statement by its six members. It soon turned out that they did not express the will of the majority of deputies, nor did they express the will of the peoples inhabiting Russia, as the presidential election showed. James Madison would be greatly surprised to learn that he is quoted in justification of such a state of affairs.

Is it worth censuring the "provincial lawyer" Baburin if the eminent Leningrad lawyer Professor Sobchak hastened to declare upon assuming the post of the city's mayor: "I shall forbid the staff members of the mayor's office to give explanations to deputies (of the city Soviet) on matters not relating to their constituencies." Thus, a deputy of the Leningrad Soviet will be unable to find out what the mayor's office is doing to help, say, the Kirov opera and ballet theatre or the waterworks in another constituency, though both are needed for the entire city. In the opinion of our execu-

People's deputies of Russia will convene next autumn again to elect a chairman. Hardly an occasion for rejoicing
Photo by Dmitry Borko

tive power, both conservative and federal, which poses as democratic, a deputy is merely a privileged solicitor for the affairs of his voters.

We go to the polls not to select intercessors for ourselves but to elect our representatives who will solve local and national problems taking into account our special circumstances and interests. This combination of the general and the specific is beyond the capabilities of the best executive power, the wisest president and the kindest tsar taken separately. That is why we need counterbalances in the form of widely representative bodies in which people's deputies would defend our interests.

It has already been admitted that in the name of domestic peace a multinational country like ours needs even two representative bodies, two chambers. While tackling common problems, one would pay attention to the specific interests of citizens irrespective of their nationality, and the other would consider the special interests of various nationalities. The existence of a common leading body standing above the two chambers which often hold joint sittings does not enable them to fulfil the specific tasks for the sake of which they have been elected. It is no wonder that in a democratic state with a bicameral parliament there is no single leading body for the two chambers.

Besides, the Russian Federation is the only constituent republic in which the chambers of the parliament are elected by the Congress of People's Deputies, an outer parliament, so to speak. The majority at the congress naturally elects those deputies who are agreeable to it. Like the USSR, the Russian Federation has a two-tier system of election of its higher bodies of authority. Though the people elect their representatives to these bodies, the majority of deputies can easily remove representatives of the minority from the day-to-day management of affairs.

In accordance with the same two-tier system, Leningrad mayor Sobchak proposes that the city Soviet choose a tenth of its members to the municipal council which the mayor kindly agrees to listen to. As for the Leningrad Soviet, which was directly elected by the citizens, the democratic mayor thinks it should not meet more than once a year.

Some people today openly disagree with what Lenin said. They especially criticize him for the idea that each woman cook should take part in running the affairs of the state. We are told that all present troubles have been created by such cooks. Incidentally, there was not a single woman cook in the Lenin-led government. Not to mention the fact that "bourgeois specialists" were employed everywhere, even in the army. Today premier Valentin Pavlov who currently occupies the post Lenin held in his time, says that foreign specialists are not needed at all in the Soviet Union.

As for women cooks (**all of them**, not just one cook appointed minister of culture with the others still kept in the kitchen), the essence of democracy is that each cook, peasant, worker, teacher, engineer and doctor should run the state while remaining in their jobs. They cannot do it themselves, of course, but through their freely elected representatives. If we are to argue against Lenin it would be better to say that, having proclaimed the equal right of citizens to administer the state, he ignored the need for establishing a genuinely representative system enabling people to exercise this right.

A woman cook who knew the current prices at the market, in the end decided she could abolish it altogether. Many uneducated people appeared in the higher echelons of power because the less gifted and skilled, almost illiterate people are vitally interested in the system which enables them, contrary to the objective value of their labour, to gain the upper hand over the educated, gifted, and skilled people.

Lenin did not, of course, want to have such results and did not foresee them. However, the primacy of will over objective social reality inevitably had such consequences. This explains why the Soviets, which formally concentrated power but, in fact, merely concealed the party's authority, failed to become effective representative bodies and certainly need to be reformed. This can be done by reducing the number of deputies, sometimes by uniting Soviets or even abolishing Soviets which duplicate each other.

The only aim of such measures is to increase the influence of people's representatives, to ensure the direct election of deputies to all representative bodies from top to bottom so that the will of every citizen would be reflected in the administration of the state. The people should clearly prefer candidates whose vocational training could prove useful in government activity.

The power of the leaders of Soviet bodies of authority becomes increasingly similar to the former power of the leaders of party bodies, both executive and legislative and hence arbitrary, limited only by higher bodies, and unlimited when there are no such bodies. The draft of a new Treaty of Union contains structural defects in the system of higher bodies of authority which can become a source of conflict in the future.

The failure of the Russian Congress of People's Deputies to elect a new chairman of the parliament shows that our system still makes it possible to ignore the real will of the people. Only four of the 1,000-odd people's deputies supported the proposal for amending this system, at least restricting the functions of the parliament's chairman to presiding over its sittings.

Well, if the deputies do not have the courage to recognize as an urgent need the direct election of an effective bicameral parliament by all citizens and the abolition of expensive massive congresses, why not pose this question, even with delay, in a national referendum?

The system which virtually brings the direct representation of citizens and the division of powers to naught has no right to be called democratic.

LENINGRAD

Hard-currency market: a game with no rules

Ivan Zhagel

The government's monopoly right to dispose hard currency has resulted in a ridiculous official exchange rate and a sky-high black market one.

If one reads everything that has been recently written about the Soviet ruble's acrobatics with respect to other currencies, it will become evident that no explanations actually explain anything. To understand what's going on with the ruble, one has to possess some perverted logic. It is not clear which of the ruble's rates of exchange – there are at least four of them – can be seen as the real one.

For the benefit of debtors?

The official exchange rate of the ruble – SUR 0.60 for US$ 1.00 – is ridiculous. No bank in the world will ever follow this rate. However, those who say that this rate of exchange must now be abolished are in error.

While for years supporting any regime that called itself revolutionary, this country was giving its client regimes loans which were calculated in Soviet rubles, not dollars. Actually, the loans were given in dollars, but the rate of exchange applied was the old 0.60/1 one. If we devalue our national currency now, we will punish ourselves: the former clients will give us much less money and fewer goods than they received from us. That is why before we abolish the old exchange rate, we must negotiate with our former clients and transfer the debts into something more substantial than Soviet rubles.

The commercial exchange rate of the ruble introduced last autumn is hardly realistic either (SUR 1.8/US$ 1) although it is three times as high as the official exchange rate. It can only be used by state-run enterprises and organizations when they pay for imported raw materials, parts, assemblies and equipment.

The so-called black-market exchange rate fluctuates from 25 to 40 rubles for one dollar. This exchange rate is usually viewed as the most realistic one, but this is hardly right, because if we calculate Soviet people's incomes according to this rate, it will turn out that Soviets are poorer than people living in the poorest developing countries, which is, obviously, absurd.

Who makes use of black market services? As a rule, dollars, deutsche marks, and pounds are purchased by shadow economy dealers, representatives of new business strata, and people with high incomes wishing to preserve their capital and satisfy their exorbitant personal demands. Sometimes hard currency is purchased by people who are going to emigrate or go abroad on a tourist or business trip. In this case, too, hard currency is used to buy consumer goods for personal use or for subsequent selling in the USSR.

The black market sellers of hard currency are usually the people who render services to foreigners, including prostitutes, taxi drivers, chamber maids. Naturally, hard currency is also sold by foreigners themselves, especially those residing in this country or coming here regularly. Selling hard currency for rubles is immensely profitable for them: getting 25 to 30 rubles for one dollar they can buy themselves a good lunch at a commercial restaurant for a sum which would hardly suffice in New York or Washington to buy a cup of coffee.

After one more exchange rate was introduced last April, foreigners started using the official money-changing services, which is both more convenient and safer for them. The same applies to black-market sellers like prostitutes and taxi drivers. This new exchange rate is defined by the Hard Currency Exchange of the State Bank of the USSR and is known as the free-market exchange rate.

The currently used free-market exchange rate for private persons is now SUR 27.6 for US$1. This rate may change after the volume of operations at the Hard Currency Exchange exceeds SUR 10 million. This rule was intended to protect citizens from speculations which are possible when small amounts of hard currency appear on the market. However, that's exactly what is happening now.

Discarding the ruble

The small supply – $3 to 7 million at each auction – and the great demand for hard currency on the part of state-run enterprises and organizations have boosted the exchange rate to the unprecedented SUR 60 for one dollar in the past four months. This is a ridiculous figure which discredits the Soviet national currency. It is not incidental that the ruble has become the target of jokes and invective. The term "wooden" ruble is already used not only by journalists in newspaper articles, but also by broad segments of society – this is a very alarming fact, because it signals that people do not want rubles and will buy anything there is to buy, thus further undermining the national economy.

Who can afford to buy hard currency at the free-market exchange rate, paying sixty Soviet rubles for each US dollar? Not the state-run enterprises, of course, which have to account for all prices they set on their products and all profits they derive. The main buyers are joint ventures, various associations and cooperatives which have opportunities to make big money. However, the main problem is not that their prices are not subject to regulation. As a rule, commercial organizations write their statutes in such a way as to permit themselves to engage in almost any activities, including foreign trade which allows them to justify the exorbitant expenses of buying hard currency.

Naturally, they will not buy equipment. Equipment paid for with the dollars purchased at the free-market rate of exchane can only be self-sufficient if it makes gold out of the air. The import of computers, copiers, and other electronic hardware, which in a way stimulated economic development, used to be profitable enough to justify the expenses. Now that the free-market exchange rate has soared to sixty rubles for a dollar, commercial organizations only buy hard currency to spend it later on consumer goods which are chronically in short supply in this country and for which the Soviet nouveau riches are prepared to pay through the nose.

It may seem at first glance that there is nothing wrong with this practice – after all it helps bring some good-quality goods to our poor consumer market. At the same time the situation is not all that harmless. We are in the habit of saying that the former Soviet leadership used to waste hard currency. Today, however, hard currency is also used to import consumer goods, not advanced equipment and state-of-the-art technology. This means that in the foreseeable future the Soviet Union is going to remain a source of raw materials for the rest of the world.

What must be done in this situation to sort things out, to make this country's hard-currency reserves work? How to define a single exchange rate of the ruble against other currencies that would open up the way to world economic integration?

Convertibility at home

Fortunately, we have realized that no one can help us create a decent life. Only free-market relations can repair the national economy. Only free-market relations can help us define the only realistic exchange rate of the ruble. However, a free market, including the free market of hard currency, has yet to be created in this country.

In general, there are no differences between the market of currencies or the market of grain, machines, or building materials. If a state distributes the bulk of its output of bricks in a centralized manner and sells only some tiny amount of bricks on the free market, the prices will not be just in either case. The same is happening with hard currency: by monopolizing the distribution of the bulk of hard currency, the state brought about the situation in which no one honours the state-set official and commercial rates of exchange. There is much confusion on the free market of hard currency as well, because this market filters only two percent of the country's hard-currency reserves, which is insignificant compared to the mass of rubles inundating the country.

That is why the rejection of any form of centralized distribution must be the first step in the formation of a free market of hard currency. This measure is called the top priority one in the programme of the transition to domestic convertibility of the ruble which is now being prepared by the federal-republican committee. This could not have been otherwise: after all, convertibility is first and foremost the opportunity to buy and sell the national currency according to the rate of exchange defined by the free market.

In the context of domestic convertibility of the ruble, Soviet organizations will not be able to buy foreign currency to make investments abroad. Foreign organizations will have the right to sell foreign currency for rubles, but the reverse operations – the buying of foreign currency for rubles – will only be possible as a result of these organizations' economic activities in this country. In this case, they will be able to export their dividends.

One more very important condition of domestic convertibility is enterprises' and organizations' compulsory selling of foreign currency earned on the free market according to current exchange rates. Naturally, enterprises and organizations will be able to buy foreign currency freely in case they need it for some foreign trade operations. If the rate of exchange remains

stable, there will not be any psychological problems. Each enterprise must be sure that if it sells one dollar for five rubles today, it will not have to pay eight rubles to buy one dollar tomorrow.

The problem is how to protect the stable rate of exchange from unexpected fluctuations? Experts from the Ministry of Economic Policies and Forecasts have calculated that in 1992 this country will need $40 to 45 billion. If the domestic market is able to process this sum in a year, it will be possible to avoid sharp fluctuations.

How much foreign currency can the country hope to get in reality? This year the hard currency revenue is expected to be much less than in previous years, and will amount to $20 billion. This is a result of the drop in the world prices for energy carriers and a decline in the production of traditional Soviet export items. However, we will not even be able to use this $20 billion the way we would like to use it.

The Soviet $60 billion foreign debt restricts room for economic manoeuvre. The debt service alone amounts to $15 billion annually. As a result, all we will have will be $5 billion – a negligible sum. In 1992 the situation will be no better. Where could the rest of the money possibly come from?

We may be able to negotiate a postponement of debt service and it will give us $15 billion. We will get some money from foreign investments attracted in the process of privatization. At the same time privatization is only starting and it would be naive to cherish illusions on this score. The only way out seems to be new loans.

After Mikhail Gorbachev's meeting with the Group of Seven in London, the Soviet Union is likely to get some money, but only for concrete programmes, like, for instance, the setting up of stabilization funds from which the government could draw money to keep the exchange rate of the ruble stable. What will be that exchange rate?

What can we afford? Again, according to the experts from the state bank and the Ministry of Economic Policies, the highest rate of exchange the Soviet economy can adapt to is SUR 5 for $1. This is exactly the exchange rate that results from the influx of $40 billion into the domestic market.

Fighting for hard currency

Counting on considerable profits from the introduction of domestic convertibility of the ruble, we must not forget about the attendant serious difficulties, in particular, economic ones. Many enterprises will soon go bankrupt, especially in the light industry which is so important for us now.

As is known, most enterprises of the light industry depend heavily on imported raw materials, parts, and assemblies. They will not be able to afford to purchase foreign currency at the free-market rate of exchange. For some time, such enterprises will balance on the brink, raising prices all the time (free prices are another indispensable element of domestic convertibility), but sooner or later obsolete equipment and old technologies will usher in bankruptcy.

There is one more problem that has come up recently and is connected with the contemplated liberalization of the foreign currency market and the transition to domestic convertibility of the ruble. The problem is that the republics have been quite successful in their efforts to wrestle more autonomy from the centre. Now they have the right to spend part of their revenues in foreign currency the way they see fit and have become significantly more independent in issuing import licences. The transition to domestic convertibility will cancel the results of these efforts.

What distribution of foreign currency can be possible if all the foreign currency earned must be sold on a free market? It is also evident that licensing and customs policies must be carefully coordinated. It would seem that there can be no other viewpoints, but when the desire for more independence prevails over all other considerations, any restrictions of the hard-won rights are regarded as attempts to encroach on sovereignty.

Anyway, the government of Russia insists it must be able to distribute part of the republican earnings in foreign currency. One wonders in what way the new system will differ from the old one. It is naive to believe that the government of Russia will be more lucky in disposing its foreign currency reserves than the federal government. However, naiveté is not the only thing behind the Russian government's insistence.

In this case it is not really a problem of who controls foreign currency, but of who wields more power. Before a free market is formed, a stratum of republican bureacrats will appear who will fight for their rights as bitterly as their counterparts on the federal level. The problem of introducing domestic convertibility will be the first battleground where the opponents will test each other's strength. At some conferences republican representatives have already been known to furiously oppose this idea.

Sooner or later we will arrive at a free currency market – there is no alternative to it. The rebirth of the nation and the nation's economy will begin with the emergence of the convertible ruble respected throughout the world.

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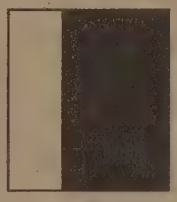

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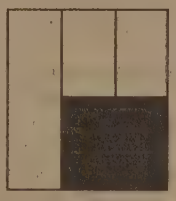

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START at last

A 20–year effort materializes in a historic Treaty

Andrei Kortunov

The post-Cold War nuclear arms race: new rules of the game

The Treaty, often referred to as START for short, is not just another arms control agreement. It is the product of a twenty-year Soviet-American effort in this sphere.

START reflects both the positive and negative aspects of the traditional model of talks. Its shortcomings lie on the surface. It would be unfair, however, to demand that diplomats and politicians reach an ideal agreement in a period of transition when the Cold War approaches no longer work, and new ones are just taking shape. It is much more useful, I think, to ponder over alternative options of the negotiating process for ten-fifteen years ahead, concentrating not so much on new opportunities, as on old and new threats to arms control. After all, the termination of the Cold War does not automatically guarantee either rapid nuclear disarmament, or higher strategic stability.

Parity is dead. Long live parity!

Since the early seventies, the parity principle expressed by the "equality and equal security" formula has been the point of departure in negotiating any agreements. Whether an agreement was "fair" or "unfair" depended on the extent and comparative importance of the concessions made by either side. Parity was interpreted as an approximate quantitative equality in terms of combat potential. Negotiations as such boiled down to a search of ways to replace some strategic systems by others. As a result, each side became a hostage to the partner's strategic decisions. Since the USA surpassed the USSR, on the whole, in the qualitative aspect of the arms race, Washington could turn the negotiations to advantage simply by imposing its strategic concepts and setting the rules of the game in the nuclear sphere.

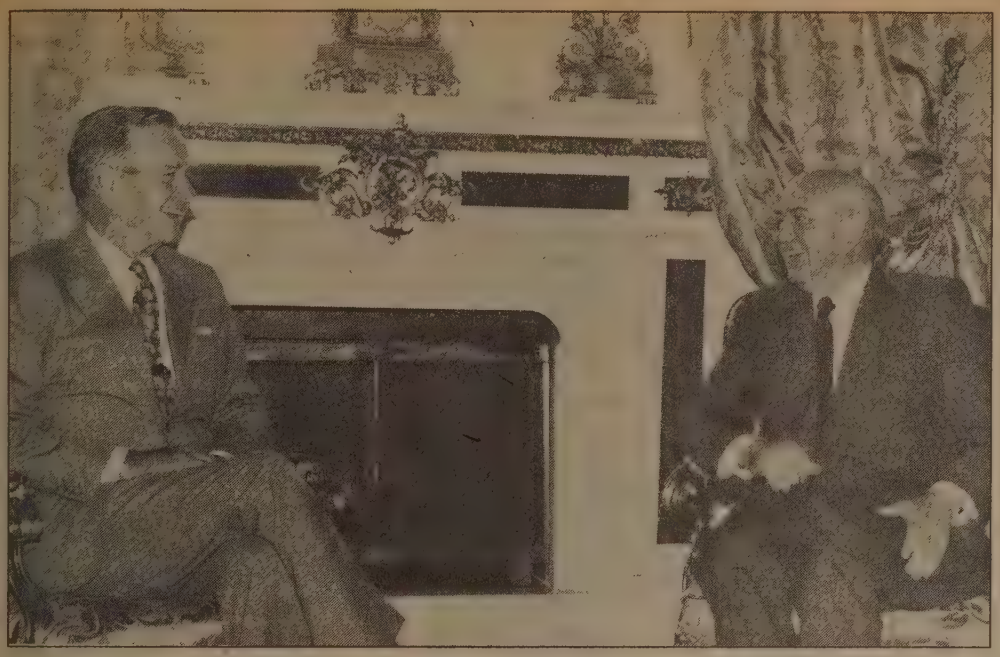
Maintaining certain advantages within the framework of approximate parity has been regarded by the US as vital compensation for the USSR's superiority in conventional weapons. Moscow has never formally acknowledged the latter imbalance, nor the US right to maintain compensatory advantages in the nuclear sphere. Nevertheless, taking the interconnection between nuclear and conventional balances into unofficial account remained an essential element of the parity principle.

Theoretically, the traditional model of arms control could lead to the complete symmetry of the sides' strategic forces. In its turn, this symmetry could help work out an integral Soviet-American strategic stability concept, with the Americans keeping certain advantages gained from their higher technological standard and from the specific features of their country's geostrategic position.

In the second half of the eighties, however, both the USA and the USSR called the firmness of the parity principle into question. The USSR put forward the "reasonable sufficiency" and "asymmetrical response" concepts – the former was an attempt to find a new, "non-parity" basis for strategic planning, and the latter was a clear signal to the US administration that Moscow was not going to copy all of Washington's strategic decisions. Doubt was cast on the prospect of Soviet-American strategic convergence.

For their part, the Americans, in the process of the START talks, could not resist the temptation of turning the period of the USSR's maximum weakness to their advantage by getting as much and giving as little as possible.

Let me make it perfectly clear that I do not think START detracts from the USSR's security. The "margin of strength" built up in the nuclear sphere since the late forties is so great that the reductions provided for by START will have no appreciable impact on the strategic balance. Besides, the Bush administration will be in no position to make practical use of some of the advantages it got from the



Partnership in the making
TASS photo

USSR during the negotiations: Congress will simply refuse to fund many programmes.

Psychologically, however, the feeling that START is "unequal" may have serious consequences. All the more so because the concluding phase of the negotiations coincided with radical changes in the balance of conventional weapons on the European continent. Today it is hard to justify even limited advantages of the USA in the nuclear sphere by references to Soviet superiority in conventional weapons in Europe.

The Americans ought to bear in mind that as it is losing its great power status and coming up against US "national egoism" in Geneva, the USSR may lose interest in bilateral arms control, and show preference for "nuclear isolationism" which presupposes complete independence from the US in the strategic sphere ("asymmetrical response") and renunciation of the American "strategic concept" (including the criteria of "inadmissible damage," the definitions of "destabilizing systems", and so on).

Such an option would be largely reminiscent of the strategic line Gaullist France took in the sixties: being unable to obey both nuclear superpowers' rules of the game, Paris preferred to ignore those rules altogether. If Moscow decides to follow suit in the nineties – then the existing infrastructure of Soviet-American negotiation is doomed to a rapid decline.

Will Achilles catch up with a turtle?

Over two decades, the USSR and the USA have grown accustomed to producing the results of their negotiations in the shape of legal agreements subject to ratification (with exceptions of executive agreements). This practice imparted reliability to the understandings reached and provided extra guarantees against their violations.

With the passage of time, however, these legal procedures dragged out negotiations to an ever greater extent, and made the texts of the agreements bulky (START, for instance, is a volume of 700 pages). Much time and effort goes into finalizing definitions, weapons counting rules, the elaboration of their elimination and verification procedures. While the documents took longer and longer to prepare, the progress of military technology kept accelerating and depreciating the documents which were literally just signed.

The START negotiations are, perhaps, the most graphic example of the traditional negotiations model's inability to catch up with both the development of the world political situation and with the progress of military technology. During Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to Washington late in 1987, both sides thought it would be possible to sign START the following year, 1988.

In the opinion of many experts, if the sides fail to sign a comprehensive agreement like SALT-2 or START within five years of sitting down to a negotiating table, it hardly pays to sign it at all: the points of departure become obsolete by then.

The need to take the prospect of ratification into account led to a situation where bilateral talks actually became trilateral, with the US Congress coming to take part in them along with the Soviet and American governments (not to mention both sides' consultations with their allies). This complicated the process still further. Now that the USSR Supreme Soviet has become party to the country's foreign and military policy, negotiations have actually become quadripartite. And for all we can tell, our Republican Supreme Soviets may at some point develop a taste for discussing strategic problems.

Under these circumstances, the question arises: will Achilles catch up with the turtle? Is the existing negotiations mechanism capable of holding such a load?

What professionals cannot do

Traditionally, negotiations have always been conducted at two levels: professional (diplomats, the military, technical experts) and political (summits, talks between Foreign Ministers). At the former level, specific problems were looked into, and at the latter level, fundamental agreements were reached.

This arrangement worked successfully,

on the whole, although serious problems did arise from time to time. For example, if statesmen reached no agreements of substance, professional negotiations often reached a stalemate, with the members of the Soviet and American delegations in Geneva merely trying to "sell" each other their old positions in a new packaging. This game of spillikins went on for months.

On the other hand, the politicians' determination to reach an agreement at the given summit by all means usually caused a rush in Geneva.

Now that the spectrum of Soviet-American interaction has extended, the political leaders of the two countries have many subjects of discussion not connected with nuclear weapons. There being no immediate danger of a nuclear clash, strategic problems will inevitably be diminishing in importance. Technocrats insist that the process of negotiations ought to be "depoliticized" to a minimum, that statesmen ought to reduce the pressure they put on the delegations in Geneva. In their opinion, disarmament negotiations should take on a more routine character while remaining an important but far from decisive component of Soviet-American relations. "Professionalization" will help make negotiations more consistent and, at the same time, avoid groundless hopes and inevitable disappointments.

The professionals' logic is most convincing, but the "depoliticization" of negotiations has negative aspects to it as well. First of all, negotiations will drag on still longer without steady political pressure: as a matter of fact, a professional approach presupposes gradual progress. Professional negotiators would rather untie the Gordian knots of arms control than cut them.

Second, the professionalization of negotiations may eventually degenerate into their bureaucratization. A protracted negotiating process inevitably turns its participants into a caste of sorts with group interests of its own which at times differ substantially from those of the state.

Third, as distinct from political leaders, professional "technicians" have no means of opposing the pressure from numerous forces inside the country interested in keeping this or that strategic programme. If the political leadership, by turning arms control over to professionals, is not prepared to defend the subsequent agreements, counteraction will have ever greater prospect of success then.

And still I think that the time of all-embracing arms control agreements is past. START-2 should become not an agreement as such but a process – a series of specific agreements on relatively particular matters which, in their sum total, will complement START-1.

Such an approach will not necessarily facilitate negotiations. It was not only for political reasons that the USSR and the USA tried to reach all-embracing agreements in the seventies and the eighties, although such reasons were also a factor. The larger the overall package of problems under discussion, the easier it was to reach a compromise by exchanging concessions in one sphere for concessions in another. In view of the existing asymmetries in the structures of Soviet and American strategic forces, let alone the British, French, and Chinese nuclear potentials, it is most difficult to find mutually acceptable solutions to certain problems in isolation from others. This difficulty can be coped with provided the package principle is retained, with the packages being exactly as large as necessary for reaching a compromise.

Another danger of a staggered schedule of negotiations lies in that the delegations will try to concentrate on relatively easy problems on which there are no special differences, and to shelve more difficult issues (this tendency manifested itself even during the START negotiations). The result will be not so much a restriction as the rationalization of the arms race: the blocking of its trends which are regarded by the either side as "hopeless." This tendency can be neutralized only, perhaps, if the negotiators are under constant political pressure from the participating countries' legislative bodies and from the public.

Odd man not out

The efficacy of arms control will depend largely on the extent to which the USSR and the USA draw third nuclear countries into it.

There are technical as well as political barriers to that. For instance, it will be necessary to replace the time-tested principles of negotiations (parity, equality in terms of combat potential, compatibility of mutual concessions) by much more complicated criteria based on a multilateral nuclear balance.

In the long run, nuclear arms control negotiations are likely to resemble the current talks on the redistribution of the defence burden within the framework of NATO. In the foreseeable future, however, nuclear weapons will remain an important political status symbol for countries relatively weak economically (the USSR, France, Britain), which will certainly hinder negotiations. Besides, the nuclear states' security problems will differ even if these countries reach a mutual understanding. For the USSR, say, it may prove to be of the utmost importance to resort to "extended deterrence" in some form or other in order to offset potential conventional arms imbalances in its southern or eastern borders.

The changeover to multilateral forms of control over strategic weapons can be made easier if its purposes are changed. The utopianism of the complete and universal nuclear disarmament idea has long been obvious to Soviet and American experts. Nevertheless, both countries' politicians announced their commitment to this idea, thus arousing false hopes in the public and misleading third nuclear powers. Multilateral arms control should aim not only for dramatic reductions of the existing arms stockpiles, but also for the coordination of arms modernization programmes and promoting confidence building measures in the strategic sphere. In this case, third nuclear countries could join in the Soviet-American dialogue in an extremely flexible way (as the first move, the number of signatories to the agreement on centres for the reduction of nuclear war danger could be increased, and a multilateral agreement on notification of ballistic missile launchings reached). Each nuclear power could have a chance to decide on the degree of its participation in arms control proceeding from its own analysis of the attendant gains and losses.

And another thing. If international relations keep improving, one-sided actions restricting the leading powers' military efforts may surpass in efficiency even modernized arms control techniques. So it is important to coordinate their one-sided moves.

Being unofficial, the coordination of such moves will in no way impinge upon the third countries' nuclear planning independence – none of them has voiced so far its readiness to participate in "classical" negotiations even as an observer – while creating conditions for achieving a more stable global nuclear balance.

A summit in Guadalajara

A glass of tequila in token of reconciliation

The first ever summit meeting of 21 Latin American countries and the countries of the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal) was held recently in the picturesque resort town of Guadalajara. "Bolivar's dream has come true at last," newspapers wrote enthusiastically. Indeed, an important event took place in Guadalajara. An Iberian-American community has been set up.

For a long time little attention was given to ties between Latin America and the two European countries. It will be recalled, however, that the language, religion, part of the cultural legacy, and even political systems have been gained by Latin Americans from Spain and Portugal. The Iberian-American alliance formed in Guadalajara can therefore become in the future an equally important factor of world politics as the British Commonwealth or the French community.

The family reunion was attended by a relative who was not invited to meetings of this kind in the past because he always acted in defiance of his neighbours. It was Fidel Castro. His participation was certainly a significant feature of the forum. In many respects the Cuban leader remained true to himself. Contrary to the encouraging forecasts of respected international financiers he drew a rather gloomy picture of the economic situation on the continent. Castro reminded the Spanish and Portuguese – descendants of the European conquistadors – of their "rapacious" activity in the past. He criticized Mexican President Salinas, who sponsored the summit, for his excessive enthusiasm over the plan of founding a "tripartite union" of the North American countries – Canada, the United States and Mexico. UN Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar, who was invited to the meeting, was flayed for making the UN machinery serve the interests of "North American hegemonism."

There was polite applause when Castro ended his emotional speech. The next morning Foreign Ministers of Cuba, Chile and Colombia signed a communiqué on the restoration of consular relations. Baena Soares, Secretary-General of the Organization of American States (long called the "ministry of colonies" by Cubans), argued at a briefing for reporters that times have changes and Cuba could again take its place in the OAS.

On the whole, the Iberian-American dialogue was not reduced to attacks on the Havana regime. Latin American leaders did not follow Washington's call for tougher criticism of the "totalitarian regime" in Cuba. That is why Washington watched the Guadalajara assembly with some irritation. It seems that the dollars invested in the hobbling Latin American economy allowed the North Americans to count on the loyalty of the recipients. But this did not happen. The participants in the forum agreed on the whole with the Venezuelan government's opinion that the Cubans "should not be driven into a corner but should be integrated into Latin America, which is prepared to accept them."

Most leaders of the Iberian-American community probably concluded that any attempt at a violent overthrow of Cuba's present system is fraught with unpredictable consequences. On the contrary, the way of gradual reforms, the integration of the "relative" into world economic ties, seems to be the most promising way of extricating Cuba from its present crisis.

The summit meeting adopted a declaration expressing the readiness of Latin American countries, Spain, and Portugal to work for a comprehensive regional integration. The participants in the meeting spoke in defence of human rights, for the solution of ecological problems and a more effective struggle against drug trafficking. The Guadalajara declaration was also signed by Fidel Castro, though it contains statements unpleasant for Havana. For instance, Cuba is politely called for the "full observance of human rights, the promotion of democracy, and the strengthening of pluralism in international relations."

Perhaps in the end it will all come right in the Latin American home. It is reported that after one of the sittings the Cuban leader came up to one of his fiercest critics and proposed that they drink a glass of tequila (a Mexican liquor) together at supper. The latter willingly agreed.

Fidel Castro and his entourage in Guadalajara

Photo from the Time magazine

Yuri Kudimov,
our own correspondent
GUADALAJARA–MEXICO

On the brink of an abyss

REFLECTIONS

Armed force proves ineffective, but violence continues

Alexander Didusenko

The leaders of the conflicting armed nationalists and the Yugoslav People's Army Command evidently pay no heed to calls for ending the bloodshed. Some firmly believe that their republics can be divorced from the federation only by force, while others count on the army's ability to restore order.

Hopes for strength are very familiar, and they are absolutely illusory. Ulster, Lebanon, and Nagorny Karabakh (in Azerbaijan) convincingly show that it does not help. I think, future historians will call the 20th century an epoch of the fall of multinational states in which the dominant nations relied on force. Force did not prove a reliable component linking a multinational community. As the priority of law began to gain ascendancy in public consciousness and the mass media deprived the armed force of the possibility to exercise violence secretly, force has become ineffective.

Unfortunately, it has not lost its ability to cause suffering to those whom fate has made victims and involuntary participants in conflicts. As a result, Serbs are shooting at Croatians and Croatians at Serbs. The failure of force is accompanied by an unprecedented escalation of violence, the roots of which lie in impotence.

It is a paradox, if you like. For a long

The Yugoslav tragedy continues. No sooner had tension been reduced in Slovenia than the conflict flared up in Croatia. A real war has started between the Croatians and the ethnic Serbs living in that republic. The killed and wounded on both sides can already be counted in tens and hundreds. More and more people are left homeless. Stability has been upset and the future becomes unclear. Ever new forces are being drawn into the conflict which increasingly threatens to thwart the good intentions of governments and politicians and the hopes of the people.

TASS photos

time it was believed that ideology was able to unite a multinational community into a single state. It was thought that the children of different nationalities, rallied round wise parties equipped with an advanced theory, rising above their discord and national interests, could jointly strive for a radiant communist future. The hope has not been justified. The advanced theory did not stand the test of time. The road to the bright future has led to a dismal impasse. Having lost the reputation of wise leaders, the parties have lost power, too.

The nationalists-ethnocrats, who have replaced internationalists-partocrats at the helm of state are now trying to set a course towards their own national shores in the hope that their peoples, having broken the fetters of "fraternal friendship," will be able to take a worthy place in the world more rapidly. The partocracy is naturally resisting, trying to rely on the army and state security bodies which have preserved their loyalty to the old structures and thus compensate for ideological impotence by force of arms.

I have used the words ethnocrats and partocrats together consciously. Brought up under one and the same political system, they are amazingly similar in the extreme radicalism of purely confrontational thinking, the reluctance to listen to anyone and the belief in force as a means of settling issues. I am afraid, therefore, that the course of ethnocrats towards their "national shores" will prove as hopeless and tough as the course of their predecessors towards "a radiant" communist future.

Regrettably, the ethnocracy, which has been brought into being by awakened nationalism, is unable to recognize the priority of universal human values over national ones, just as the partocracy was unable to recognize the priority of universal human values over class interests.

The above said concerns not only Yugoslav problems. The partocracy and ethnocracy demonstrate everywhere their amazing inability to reach a reasonable compromise. They are prepared to fight to the last, by the hands of others, naturally, pushing themselves and their peoples to the brink of an abyss.

Coming back to the "heartbreak house"

An almost romantic story of a man who, in fulfilling the solemn oath he had made in his childhood, could have become a ruthless avenger. Instead, he became the mayor of the city, where those who had wronged him lived

Forty-one years ago Nikolai Somlev had been refused admission to that house. Last year he was carried into it.

The house used to belong to the militia (police). Now it belongs to the city council. In socialist Bulgaria, the best buildings were given over to the people's militia so that it could discharge its revolutionary punitive functions better.

Nikolai was four when they came for his father in 1950. On the following day his mother took the boy by the hand and went to the house in the hope of finding out about her husband's fate and being received by a militia officer of authority. "It was very cold, and no one told us anything," Somlev reminisces.

Exactly forty years later, Nikolai Somlev, a non-Party engineer, became the mayor of the city. Thousands of people gathered in front of the city council building. They picked up Somlev and carried him into the house. The chairman of the provisional executive committee of the people's city council was to them a symbol of hope. The new mayor swore to them that no child would ever see his father taken away under escort in the dead of the night, to be condemned, without trial, as "an enemy of the people."

Somlev Sr. had returned from a concentration camp a few years later, minus a couple of ribs. He was under police surveillance to the end of his days.

Plovdiv Monte-Cristo

In the society which called itself socialist the fate of a child was determined by his origin. In Bulgaria, that was even legalized. The children of the fighters for communism were entitled to every conceivable privilege – from that of getting higher education to that of living in a roomy, well-appointed apartment. The children of those who represented the alien classes were looked upon as second-rate.

Who became "the city father" now? A deeply wronged man? An avenger who got a much-coveted chance of squaring accounts with the Communists?

"I have no political ambitions," Somlev told me. "I am a technocrat. I classify men by their professional standards, not by their political views. Whatever exceptions I make from my general rule are in favour of Communists only."

For instance?

"I have given the post of a plant director to a member of the Bulgarian Socialist Party, a good specialist." (In Bulgaria, there are practically no Communists left. With the exception of a few orthodoxes, all the other members of the Communist Party welcomed it being renamed the Bulgarian Socialist Party.)

Was that a mistake?

"The director fell victim to his Party committee. He was compelled to employ the now redundant Party functionaries who proved totally incompetent. So the workers themselves demanded that I dismiss the director. He had obeyed his Party's orders – and lost his job. After that he made a fool of himself: in an attempt to curry favour with the workers, he handed out as bonuses the money given him by the city for housing construction."

A criminal offence?

"I gave him three days to refund the money and warned him that otherwise he would go on trial. However, if I fire him now, the BSP committee would accuse me of political discrimination. I hope he'll have the sense to realize that he's got to go..."

A stalwart and athletic man, Nikolai did not look like Count Monte-Cristo, who had returned to avenge himself on the "bad guys." In his childhood he had probably made a solemn oath to do so, but now he was responsible for Plovdiv, Bulgaria's second largest city. And childish oaths are nothing but a pretext for sad reflections if Somlev has the time for them.

"You will hardly be able to understand what's going on in the country," he told me. "We do not understand many things ourselves. There is even no telling who is in power

and who is in opposition. Formally, the BSP won most of the National Assembly seats at the election. The Communists cannot run the country, however, because they enjoy no authority. The opposition is gaining strength, but has no real power. Such a situation suits the BSP, which blames the opposition for all the failures. A price rise? New problems? The opposition deputies you have elected are responsible for that! On the other hand, the opposition has no chance to come into its own..."

But then the Plovdiv City Council is headed by a representative of the opposition, not by a Communist. Nikolai Somlev was nominated for the Council chairmanship by the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF), a bloc of various parties.

"I am the head of the Council which has not been elected by the people. This makes my position rather awkward. No local elections were held last year. Instead, the self-government bodies were formed of representatives of various parties, their proportions set in strict conformity with the returns of the elections to the National Assembly. That was how a UDF representative became chairman of the Plovdiv City Council (in Plovdiv, as in Sofia and in other big cities, the opposition won the majority vote). Nevertheless, my deputy is a member of the BSP, and the secretary of the Executive Committee is a member of the Bulgarian Agrarian People's Union."

Before the collapse of the Zhivkov regime, the BAPU was the only legalized party, besides the BCP, its junior partner.

"Although the idea was considered to be most sensible and fair, considering the correlation of forces in society, it just didn't work. It is impossible to coordinate even a minor decision with all the political forces. Three parties are blocking each other. Party interests have been observed, but economic reforms are going slowly. Although the BSP is no longer capable of running the city, it can always trust it to torpedo any decision which does not suit its local committee."

Drawing by Igor Shein

Waiting to be demobbed

Is the opposition as impeccable as all that, free from party prejudice and prepared to support any reasonable proposal even if it comes from the Communists – that is, Socialists?

"I am a no-party man on principle. This spares me the need to carry out someone else's decisions. To be quite frank, the UDF, which has nominated me for this post, now demands loyalty. I haven't shown it, so the UDF has probably come to the conclusion that a different candidate should be backed at the next election."

Nikolai Somlev did not admit, of course, that he cared. Ambitious and masterful men resent being rejected.

"I feel like a soldier waiting to be demobbed. Every day that passes brings the longed-for moment nearer. I shall go with a sense of my duty honestly fulfilled."

What should the municipal authorities do in a transition period like this? The time when they exercised full control over all the aspects of city life is past; on the other hand, it's too early yet for them to confine themselves to road repairs and garbage disposal.

"My No. 1 aspiration now is to give full scope for the abilities of businesslike, enterprising, skilful and clever people. Two tendencies always interact in the development of society and the state. The first one is the formation of a liberal society, which with minimum state control provides unlimited opportunities for the emancipation of the spirit. The second one is the building up of an egalitarian state which undertakes to protect everyone."

Nikolai Somlev has a liking for the former concept. Does it amount to a simple rejection of what communism stands for?

"I do not reject the egalitarian state concept outright. But now it's time for liberalism. For 45 years, an egalitarian state based on the Sovite model suppressed individuals in Bulgaria, those among the Communists included. This state has collapsed. Now it is necessary to clear the way for political and economic liberalism, to give scope for a free development of every individual."

"I want them to go bankrupt"

Well, how about the clever and skilful ones? Is he in a position to help them?

"Small cafes, stalls, kiosks have already been privatized for the most

part, and their owners are working hard from morning till night to get business going. On the whole, however, trade remains a state monopoly. The monopolists keep boosting prices to cover up their incompetence. The interests of the sellers and of the city trade authorities fully coincide. Some take home bagfuls of loot after work, others continue to sponge on the state-run trading system. The personnel we have inherited from the Communists is no good. The former Komsomol or Party functionaries do not know the first thing about the jobs they are in charge of, but it is almost impossible to get rid of them. This is a tragedy for the city."

What prevents Somlev from exercising his authority?

"The sales clerks, store managers and our entire trading network thrive on the way things are going now and resist change. When I started campaigning for each store being run by his owner, they threatened me with a strike. Much as the Plovdiv citizens cherish the ideals of freedom, if the city is left without bread and milk for two days, I'll have to say goodbye to this house."

What is the city boss going to do about that, provided he hasn't resigned himself to being a "straw boss"?

"I want these stores to go bankrupt. They have raised prices, no one buys anything from them, there is no turnover and no money to pay off bank credits, so they are certain to go bust. They simply cannot change, adapt themselves to a new situation, promptly reduce prices and manoeuvre. I shall compel them to surrender by economic rather than administrative means."

What are the potential bankrupts in for? What will become of the city if all its trading network stops functioning?

"Those who want to go into business on their own will be granted credits. Those who put their nose to the grindstone will stand on their own feet in a couple of months, and Plovdiv will survive. Those who fail to make it will go broke. Capable people will feed our city. All they need is a chance to show what they can do."

The mayor described himself as a technocrat. This is an effective approach, but a lop-sided one, nevertheless. A city mayor should take a broader view of things. A city is not a machine.

"This is not to say that I believe solely in the profit motive, and so on. The theatre has found itself in a predicament here. Good actors lose their jobs because most companies have run out of their salary funds. A credit could be issued to them, but I do not think that it will transform our theatrical scene the way it is now. Instead, I have invited six actors, all of them young, promising but jobless, offered them a credit of 100 thousand leva and a stage. They have already created a small theatre called Plovdiv. Look for interesting plays, I told them, invite talented stage directors, try to arouse public interest in your productions.

The mayor also voiced his readiness to help Plovdiv artists in the same way.

"I have made arrangements with our London ambassador for an art exhibition to open in the British capital on September 12. 'Select 100 paintings,' I told artists. 'If you sell anything, a half of the money will go to charity, 20 percent to cover the city's expenses, and the rest to the artists' union.' I am giving them a chance. If they use it, so much the better. If not, they'll have only themselves to blame."

An aristocratic family

Does Nikolai Somlev apply this principle to himself? Or does he only preach at others?

"I was invited to Britain once. Mayors always ask one another over – it is a fine opportunity to see the world and to have a good time 'at public expense.' I took some colleagues along, we had a week of difficult negotiations, on the fourth day our lawyer had a nose bleed due to overstrain. Finally, we had Plovdiv included in the Common Market city development programme, and got half a million ECU – new European currency now popular with them but largely obscure to us. The Bank of America gave us half a million dollars to train brokers."

Bulgaria is seeking aid where it is forthcoming. Not in the East, though. Are Bulgarians becoming West-oriented?

"What I am seeking is business cooperation. I don't understand why trade between our two countries has gone all wrong. Why vegetables and sausage intended for your country perish in Plovdiv because you don't want them for some reason. Why Greeks resell Bulgarian shirts in the Soviet Union at a higher price. I think that when your fredom-of-movement law goes into force, many Russians will come to Bulgaria where it will be easier for them to settle, not only because our languages and cultures have much in common, but also because they will be accorded a friendly welcome. I for instance, have genetic reasons for liking the Russians..."

I knew what Nikolai meant. When his great-grandmother was five, she had been admitted to the court of Emperor Alexander II – many Bulgarian children of aristocratic origin were brought up in St. Petersburg then. Indeed, Somlev's background is dubious, mildly speaking, by socialist Bulgaria's standards. One of his grandfathers was a Geneva-educated doctor, and the other a priest, both coming from rich families. And his father, a bank clerk, had entered a military academy, became a cavalryman and then one of Bulgaria's first airmen. Over Sofia, Somlev Sr., a fighter pilot, attacked American bombers which raided the capital of Bulgaria, an ally of Nazi Germany. Being an officer of suspicious origin was enough for him to "qualify" as an inmate of the "heart-break house."

Now, four decades later, Nikolai Somlev has become the master of that house. Although businesslike and competent, he is not omnipotent. The homeless pitched their tents right in front of the City Council building. In one of the tents I spotted a boy about the age Nikolai Somlev had been the year his father was arrested. The boy was looking at this very house with longing eyes.

Leonid Mlechin
PLOVDIV

Patience exhausted, people driven to despair

South African blacks are in discord. The other half of the story

Below we give an interview, which Alexander PUMPYANSKY and Nikolai RESHETNYAK, *New Times* special correspondents, had with a white clergyman who preferred excommunication to giving up the struggle against apartheid

New Times. Dr Naude, to begin with, we would like to tell you about our intentions. Our team of two tries to see the South African situation at this turning point of history as clearly as possible. We have interviewed some members of the South African Government, and Dr. Buthelezi, leader of the Inkatha. So, we have gained a more or less clear idea of some aspects of current developments. And how do these developments look from the standpoint of a person whose political views are close to those of the African National Congress of South Africa?

Dr Beyers Naude. The results of negotiations between the Government and the African National Congress are of paramount importance. Without the ANC those negotiations will be fruitless. The Government and the ANC are the main forces in the process of seeking mutual understanding. So far they have very serious differences.

NT. Do you mean to say that the ANC is the spokesman of the entire black population of South Africa?

B.N. No, I do not say that the ANC is the voice of all South African blacks. I merely note that the ANC expresses the interests of most of the blacks. It does not at all mean, however, that the Inkatha or the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) should be excluded from the process of negotiations. They should attend summit conferences at a certain stage. I should like to emphasize that the ANC most fully and resolutely expresses the interests of the entire black population.

NT. What, do you think, will make negotiations successful – the ANC's constant pressure on the Government, or a painstaking and humble effort to reach a mutually acceptable agreement?

B.N. Both. Pressure should be exerted on the Government. I am one of those who support this idea. We had actively worked for sanctions against the South African Government. Without the pressure the Government would have never reached what it has reached today. And the alternatives in our case were: either political pressure, or the continuation of armed conflict.

This is but one side of the coin. At the same time, we are to conduct negotiations with the Pretoria administration. At a certain stage pressure should give way to talks. In a nutshell, both sides must make concessions, as well as fair and sound demands on each other.

NT. In this context the problem of trust comes to the fore. Does the ANC trust the Government? Does it treat the Government as a reliable partner in negotiations?

B.N. I am not entitled to speak for the ANC. A clergyman, I want but one thing: justice. I can only speak about my impression that Nelson Mandela trusts Frederik de Klerk. The ANC President also trusts some of the Government leaders, but does not trust the Government as a whole. There are also other forces beyond the control of the Pretoria administration, like the army and the police. These mighty structures have their own troubles and their own points of view on the main problems of South Africa.

I personally believe that South African President de Klerk is an honest person. I am sure that he wants progress. But I also believe that conservative and right-wing radical forces exert strong pressure on him. In addition, he also has to take into consideration his electorate. That is why not only the ANC, but also religious and other organizations should exert pressure on him.

I'll give you an example. Perhaps you know that two laws on land were repealed. Those were the most important laws of apartheid, according to which the black people had no right to land ownership. Now they have this right. So what? A vast majority of the black people simply cannot buy land in South Africa. They have no money for that. Hence, the abrogation of apartheid laws is a step forward theoretically. Practically, much more should be done. And right here, I believe, religious communities and left-wing political organizations should exert pressure on the Government.

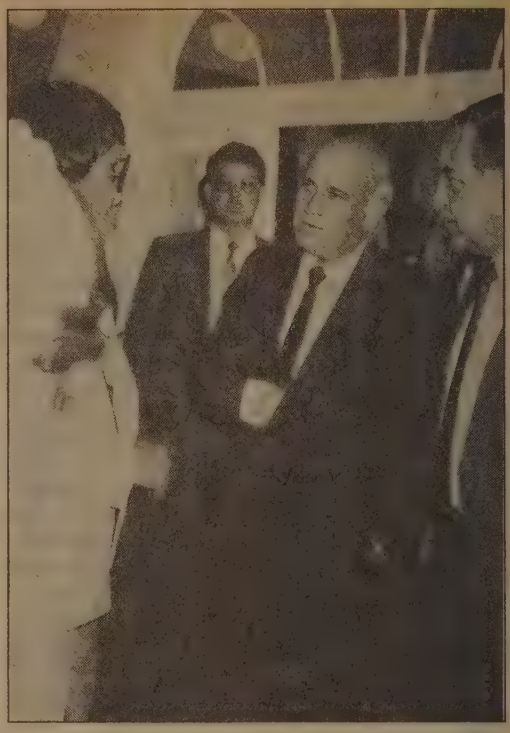
NT. Violence among the black population undermines, perhaps, all hopes for a peace-time development and peace-time reforms. What are the reasons for the violence?

B.N. A short answer is always fraught with the danger of vulgarization. The main reason for the violence should be sought in the policy of apartheid. This inheritance of the past has created

Dr Beyers Naude, an Afrikaner, is a clergyman at the Dutch Reformed Church. In the early sixties he became an active fighter against apartheid. In revenge, the higher clergy of the Dutch Reformed Church ousted "the rebellious priest" from his pulpit. On February 2, 1990, the hierarchs of South Africa's main confessions censured only manifestations of apartheid. After that Dr Naude resumed his religious duties. Dr. Naude's political views are close to those of the African National Congress of South Africa.

Nelson Mandela, the symbol of the heroic struggle against the racist regime

Frederik de Klerk, president-reformer, who cancelled apartheid from above



Will they ever be able to cooperate?

Photos by the authors

the atmosphere of violence in our country. So, this is the source or the first reason. The second reason lies in the conflict between the Inkatha and the ANC. The Zulu group has been striving for a basis of power for itself. According to the ANC, the majority of the population does not support that policy. Hence, serious tensions in the Provinces of Natal and Transvaal. The third reason is the poverty and destitution of the South African black population. This is not a political, but a socio-economic factor. Very serious forms of violence result from the conditions under which the masses of people have to live. And one more source of those forms of violence is the situation with squatters, that is, homeless people who, driven to despair, occupy dwellings without permission. Society neglects their needs, and this is dangerous.

NT. When we talked with Inkatha representatives they put the whole blame for bloodshed on the ANC. Their main argument was that in the Zulu land, the Inkatha was undoubtedly influential and did not need violence to prove its strength. To what extent is the ANC guilty of bloodshed?

B.N. I have never seen any signs of the ANC's participation in bloody clashes. Of course, I cannot say for certain, though, that none of the ANC members ever participated in the acts of violence. To my mind, none other than the Inkatha is to blame.

The Zulu group is very anxious about the loss of its positions in Transvaal. At all costs the Inkatha has been trying to form a basis of political power and to become influential among factory workers. It does not even shun putting direct pressure on people.

NT. One can assume two things in this connection. First: while fighting for influence and power the leaders of contending political forces stage acts of violence. Second: though unwilling to use arms, political leaders might not control the situation. Which of the two suppositions is closer to reality?

B.N. I haven't got enough facts to answer definitely. I can only share my impressions. Neither Nelson Mandela, nor Mangosuthu Buthelezi have issued orders about, or calls for, violence in any form. There are other forces, however. Some of the Inkatha members act with the secret support of the police. Nelson Mandela calls that "the third force." In fact, though, there exist several forces of this kind. Policemen are not at all against conflicts among black people, because Dr Treurnicht of the Conservative Party of South Africa will thus have an opportunity to say: "Look at those blacks. They cannot even get along together. How will they rule the country?" So, remaining behind the scenes, those people instigate bloodshed among the blacks.

NT. What are the prospects of agreement between the ANC and the Inkatha? In other words, is there any possibility for the black population to unite in the near future and to act in a more civilized way, so to speak?

B.N. I haven't seen such a possibility so far. The first thing to do is to arrange a serious and frank discussion between the ANC and the Inkatha, with an analysis of mutual accusations. Today any arguments of one side are utterly rejected by the other side immediately. It is necessary to form an independent legal commission of investigation for an unbiased consideration of all acts of violence and for finding out hidden mainsprings. This should be done as soon as possible. Otherwise, I am afraid, we shall again witness a bloody clash between the supporters of the ANC and the Inkatha.

NT. And can't that undermine...

B.N. ... the entire political process of a peaceful settlement in the South of Africas? Yes. As for me, I would try to do everything in my power to prevent that.

For the leaders of the Inkatha and the ANC to better understand one another they should be brought together, perhaps informally at first. Let them realize who gains by animosity and bloody dissensions. If agreement on peace between the Inkatha and the ANC leaders is not approved by common people, however, all efforts will be unavailing.

NT. In the long run it is, probably, the matter of decency in politics, isn't it? There is one more aspect. The white minority, who fear the power of the blacks, have every reason to ask, "where are the guarantees for the white minority to be safe from those horrors?"

B.N. I do not think that anyone can give such guarantees today. The only thing for us to do is to make common cause and to think about the ways of removing the main reasons for violence. One more thing is of essential importance. In all cases a bill on individual human rights should form the basis of our future constitution, which will ensure the rights of every South African citizen: a black, a white or a coloured. Furthermore, it is necessary to offer certain cultural guarantees to the white community, just as to other communities. As for political guarantees to the minority, perhaps it is unthinkable on a permanent basis. Of course, they should be envisaged for a transitional period, as was the case with Zimbabwe, for instance.

N.T. What is your idea of that transitional period? How long will it be: some months, years, or the life-span of one generation?

B.N. I don't think that negotiations between the government and the ANC could successfully end either this coming year or in another. At least two or three years are needed for their conclusion. The whole process will be longer: five years, at least.

NT. Do you mean that a transitional period proper will begin not earlier than that?

B.N. Reforms are a longer process than many people used to think. What will happen to our people, particularly young black people, some of whom are disappointed and angry, while others entertain hopes which cannot come true quickly? This is a serious problem.

NT. Don't you think that sometimes the ANC is too pushy, demanding changes too quickly? Are the ANC's demands and ways always justified?

B.N. I should say that for some period of time I also thought that way. Then I tried to see the general feelings and the train of thought of the South African black young people. And I have formulated a contrary opinion. The point is that they severely criticize and censure the ANC not for its acting too quick, but for its being too slow and its too frequent concessions to the whites. Many of them note: "Our leader becomes spineless." A vast majority of young, more radical blacks have other aspirations. To my mind, it is a real dilemma for Nelson Mandela. On the one hand, he wants to score a success at negotiations. On the other hand, he is under the pressure of the masses of people who show their impatience. Some people call the ANC's demands on the government an ultimatum, noting that those demands are groundless and too tough. I think, however, that they reflect the innermost hopes of many millions of South African blacks.

The jinnee of fundamentalism is let out

Medieval Islam tries to gain power by means of violence and murder

Abbassi Madani

The dramatic events which shook Algeria in May and June are already past history. On July 8, the tanks and troops left the capital. About 50 people died in the riots provoked by members of the Islamic Salvation Front. However, the present lull does not inspire confidence that the situation will remain calm tomorrow. On July 12, Islamic fundamentalists again tried to provoke riots in the capital. They broke into state institutions, stoned the police, and erected barricades. Twelve people were wounded during these riots.

This abscess has been worsening for a long time. President Chadli Bendjedid said with anxiety in November 1986: "We cannot leave the Mosque at the discretion of certain elements who use it for their destructive purposes." The October 1988 events were like a bolt from the blue. Mass riots, in which Islamic fundamentalists had a part, assumed the scale of civil war. The subsequent democratization of political life in the country was used by fanatics for anti-government activity. A new constitution allows the existence of a multiparty system. After its adoption in February 1989 the Islamic circles founded the Islamic Salvation Front (ISF). According to its leaders, the front had about three million supporters by the end of 1989 and controlled almost 10,000 mosques. The quantity soon grew over into quality. Last summer, campaigning under the slogan "Who votes against us votes against Allah," the ISF won elections to local government bodies, leaving behind the ruling National Liberation Front (NLF).

The unexpected success made the ISF leaders believe that they fulfil a great mission. Following the local elections the front's leader Abbassi Madani no longer concealed that its goal was to seize power and create an Islamic republic.

The jinni of Islamic fundamentalism was let out when the Algerian leadership consciously decided to strengthen the role of religion in the life of the people. The noble aim of giving the predominantly Islamic population the right to exercise freedom of conscience had an unexpected effect. Mosques have quickly become centres of forces hostile to the regime. The influence of foreign Islamic centres – Iranian and Saudi – was felt increasingly in Algeria. They advocated the idea of establishing an Islamic republic. With such assistance from outside, including financial heep, the local fundamentalists grew bolder.

I think that impatience and the overestimation of its forces impelled the ISF to make a coup attempt. Otherwise, it is difficult to understand why the Islamists took part in and won the local elections last summer, and renounced an honest competition and staged a coup attempt shortly before the new elections set for June 27.

The paradox is that in the areas where ISF members control local government bodies the living conditions have not improved, though Sharia bans are more than enough. Nevertheless, when the ISF attempted to seize power tens of thousands of people, especially youth, supported it.

While the influence of the Islamists grows the progressive democratic opposition looks "shy," as they say in Algeria. Its relations with the NLO are not shaping up well, and it is early to talk about a coalition of these two forces capable of countering the ISF. At the height of the June events the Algiers newspaper *El-Masa* observed with sarcasm: "The ISF controlled the streets while the democratic parties watched this from the windows."

The front's leader Abbassi Madani and his henchmen have been arrested. However, the new ISF leader Mohammed Said threatens: "We hold a grenade whose pin is already removed, and it is ready to fall out of our hands."

In all probability, the fundamentalists, currently on the defensive, will not give up attempts to seize power, and there is no guarantee that the former socialist-oriented country will not turn into a preserve of medieval Islam.

Sergei Filatov

DOCUMENTARY

Captive in one's own country

Lev Razgon

I will never forget the shock that overwhelmed me when in the notorious Lubyanka I read the dossiers of my family. It was not because of what I learnt there, as I had known that before. These were the dossiers of six people three of whom were shot while the other three went through that mincer which the whole world knows as the Gulag. As the only survivor, I am ordained to tell you what I know.

But do I really know the whole story? In Lubyanka I despaired, realizing that at some time in the future when the notorious KGB archives were made accessible "in response to the public demand" neither relatives of the perished nor researchers will discover anything except for a few sheets of paper noting that the person in question was arrested, confessed, was condemned and shot. Either the "special conference" or the "troika" ("triumvirate"), but not the court of law as there only the death sentence was pronounced, sentenced the person in question to eight or ten years in a "corrective labour camp" for the established "crimes." Nothing more. Yet the life and death of any one of the still unknown number of victims of "unlawful repression," as mass murder is so "tactfully" termed everywhere, transcend the dozen or less papers in that slim dossier of the kind that I examined at 2 Lubyanskaya Square.

In the winter of 1950 I was confined to the Georgievskaya transfer jail waiting to be transported to a sub-Arctic concentration camp where I would spend my new recently allotted ten-year term. The cell was large and its inmates were a nice lot as criminal underworld types were held separately. I examined my cellmates with boundless interest. Each one was a fascinating person, about whom a lot could be told. But I shall never forget the greyhaired plumber, who slept on the neighbouring bunk.

He was a calm, contemplative elderly man.

"I'm sorry for all of you," he once said, "You're all in here for nothing. I at least did something, so I've got nothing to complain about."

That was a rather rare admission.

"What are you in here for?" I asked, violating the unwritten prison rule not to put such questions.

"According to them I'm a criminal, but I must say it was only due to my own stupidity, that I was snatched!"

He told me he had been working as a plumber in Yessuntuki down in the Caucasus. Actually he was responsible for a large section of the watermains in this health resort. It was a mindboggling job, as there was so much foolishness, he could never get any spare parts, and his superiors couldn't care less. Infuriated by this mess, he mailed several postcards to Moscow to the Central Committee, the newspaper *Pravda* and the Council of Ministers. In them he wrote the whole truth. Naturally he didn't sign them, not wanting to put his head in the noose. As he got no replies, he wrote more, now though not ony about the watermains and sundry public facilities, but about everything he saw with his own eyes: the ruination of ordinary folk and the corrupt bureaucracy.

"You see I sort of liked the idea. So I would buy several dozen postcards, and send them off nearly daily. I'd now write about everything, not only about what was going in Yessentuki, but also about the highway robbery throughout the entire country. I wrote of collectivization, the year of the Great Purge. How we ran away from the Jerries, and who of the bosses went over to them. In short, I wrote about everything. I simply couldn't help it. It was like a sickness. Naturally I wasn't that stupid to mail them all from Yessentuki. As I had business in the other Mineralniye Vody towns and in Stavropol I posted them from those places and when I went to see my family outside Tula, I mailed them from that place as well.

"Didn't your family know anything about it?"

"I don't have much of a family, just the old woman. She knew all about it because she used to go to the post office to buy the postcards, and sometimes, she herself mailed them when visiting her own family elsewhere."

"How did they manage to catch you?"

"It was due to my own silliness. As a rule I did not keep a single written postcard at home. However one day I inserted an unfinished card into a book I was reading and put the book back on the shelf. I had hundreds of books because I adore reading. So, one night they turned up with a search warrant, for arms which, of course, I didn't have. But they took each book and shook it, and that unfinished card fell out. When they dragged me off to Stavropol, the local NKVD showed me all my postcards from all the places from which I had sent them, and attached to each card was one or several papers indicating when it had been mailed and who had received it. They'd organized a nationwide dragnet for me. They showed me a map with lines leading from every place from which this or that card had been mailed. Though I thought I'd managed to dupe them, they had tumbled to the fact that these cards had been written by a plumber working at one of the Mineralniye Vody resorts. So they searched the homes of everyone connected with the watermains in Kislovodsk, Yessentuki, Pyatigorsk, Zheleznovodsk and Mineralniye Vody itself. A huge drag net that finally caught me."

I was overwhelmed, as I listened to this story, so familiar from the famous novel I had once read.

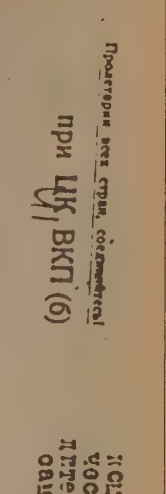
"Didn't you have among your books the novel *Everyone dies alone* by a German writer?"

"Which writer?"

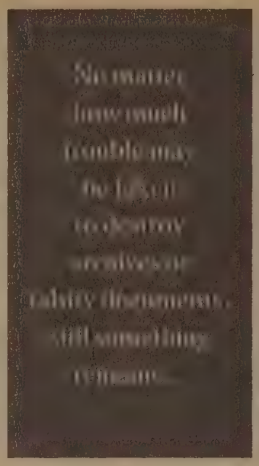
"Hans Fallada."

"No, I didn't have any books by that writer. Never heard of him, in fact."

But it was a fact that the plumber had recounted in almost full detail the famous novel by



the famous German author. What came to mind was not the astounding coincidence, but the circumstance that what for the writer has swelled into a significant to me would be reduced here to but a few sheets of paper in a slim folder indicating the circumstances of detention plus a couple of interrogation sheets, the charge and the court verdict. For such is the type of folder that will find its way into the hands of anyone who may subsequently undertake to reinstate my bunkmate, who must have died somewhere in the Gulag. On the other hand, everything that comprises the flesh and spirit of Hans Fallada's novel will have disappeared, unless it might lie somewhere in thus far iults of this chives. So is there any chance that we will get at the full truth at some time in the future? I don't mean "eyewitness" accounts or my own experience, but documents, which though they may also tell a lie, will nevertheless furnish the thread that will lead to the heart of the matter.



"These archives have been destroyed!" the sceptics say, who do not believe that will ever come about. No doubt they tried indeed to destroy or amend them with the more ominous stuff deleted. That was done even when virtually all archives were totally inaccessible, and that contines to be done even nowadays when some archives are opened up. However, I think documents have one specific trait. Mikhail Bulgakov once declared in his celebrated *Master and Margarita* that "manuscripts do not burn," a phrase which has now gained nationwide currency. This holds still more for documents. I remember that when as a student I was studying the history of the Great French revolution, I was overwhelmed when I learned that Albert Mathiez, the celebrated radical historian of that Revolution, had discovered in the archives documents nailing Danton, one of the heroes of the Revolution, as having taken money from the king. Which means even such things may see the light of day!

According to the old Russian tradition which has been so greatly amplified by our proletarian state, anything the bosses do necessarily, has its accompanying paper. I would say that every single person is attended by hundreds of papers of diverse content from the moment he is born to the moment he dies. They are dispersed among different archives for a whole host of reasons that we cannot always comprehend.

Lenin's maternal grandfather's nationality always presented an enigma to historians. What was the nationality of Alexander Blank, graduate of the St.Petersburg Academy of Surgery? Not the slightest trace is to be found in any of the archives. Evidently everything was done to conceal what might denigrate Lenin not only in the eyes of run-of-the-mill and not so run-of-the-mill anti-Semites, but even of the big bosses. However, that tireless authoress Marietta Shaginyan, after failing to find anything of that order in all the archives she researched, decided one day to peep into the forgotten, unwanted, but still extant archives of the St.Petersburg Consistory, where at last she found in the appropriate volume a record of the conversion of the Jew Israel Blank re-named Alexander when baptized.

As meticulously destroyed was everything relating to the NKVD's Katyn massacre of some 15,000 Polish army officers. Even when we were absolutely sure who was really guilty of this crime, it was impossible to find any confirming document. The "thread" was discovered in the victualing ledger for the troop convoy accompanying the trains with the imprisoned Polish officers to the places where they were killed. The entire practice of the historical discipline tells us that no matter how much trouble may be taken to destroy or falsify documents, still something will remain. In his day the celebrated 19th-century Russian satirist Saltykov-Shchedrin observed that "Russian writing appeared due to the oversight of the bosses." I think this as valid for the historical truth, which is making headway with such difficulty.

* * *

Most likely researchers will not be able to obtain access that soon to the "inner sanctuary" of the sinister archives, where preserved are the denunciations of informants, the real interrogation sheets, the records of confrontations, the faked and genuine letters of relatives, in short, all the mountains of paper produced by those tens of thousands of people who exterminated other tens of thousands of people, organizing wholesale terror.

True, today, though not fully, the results of this activity have been uncovered. To this day the KGB will not give the exact authentic figure of the slain; however, it is already possible to obtain the kind of permit I got, examine a slim folder with its few sheets of paper, and learn the exact date when a relative was shot. For several months running now the Moscow evening newspaper *Vechernyaya Moskva* has featured in issue after issue the photos, appended with a short biographical note of people shot somewhere in the basements of the buildings within that accursed block and clandestinely interred in one or another of Moscow's graveyards. Note that all these killings refer not to the "height" of the Great Purge of

1937-38. These people were shot at the start of the 1930s; they have nothing at all in common with the echelons of the Communist Party and government leadership who were annihilated after December 1, 1934. They were ordinary folk. Some were not even affiliated with the Communist Party. They were warehouse keepers, accountants, junior researchers or held some other unimportant job. What is terrible is that the time that elapsed between their detention and killing was very brief, now and again not more than a few weeks. Most likely nobody in their families could understand why they had been apprehended and shot. Today we know why.

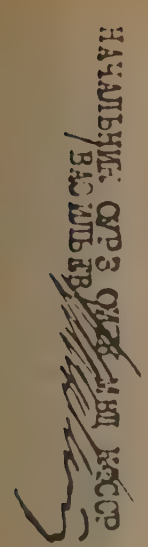
It was held that the prisoner could slave at least three months or so and thus foot part of the bill for his own destruction

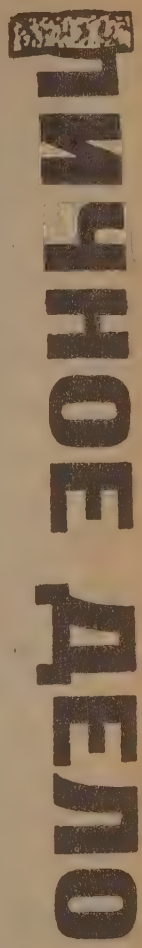
These "lists of the shot," that are published in the evening Moscow newspaper, name people, who though of diverse callings, were all connected in one way or another with food supply and agriculture. Nineteen thirty was the year of an organized famine in the Ukraine and an unorganized famine that stretched out as far as Moscow. Some may still remember Stalin's tirade as to the need to wage "a ruthless struggle against the organizers of the famine." Precisely these murdered accountants, agronomists and office clerks were to show the nation that the people to blame for the famine had been caught, indicted and punished. I peer at these tiny faded photos of people whose faces already bear the imprint of early demise, and note the date when shot. They were slain in batches of 15-20 at a go and in these same batches were conveyed at night to a cemetery, where in some faraway corner, a large pit had already been dug to take the corpses. At these cemeteries a trusted agent had to sign the list of accepted corpses and this is the thread that led to the KGB Moscow office whose archives contain the respective dossiers. Only later when shot daily in Moscow were not dozens but hundreds of people, were the dead bodies interred not in cemeteries but somewhere in Moscow's environs, in some secret place, behind a fence, with the people who did this "job" not ordinary public utilities workers who had signed a pledge not to reveal the fact, but carreer butchers of diverse rank and calling.

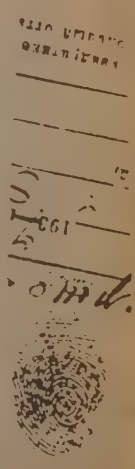
Yet however nightmarish in number the "immediate" murders accomplished by a shot in the nape of the neck may be, still most of those who "never returned" perished in the concentration camps of the sprawling Gulag Archipelago, whose "islands" big and small, differed in organization and designation, and as time passed, they also changed.

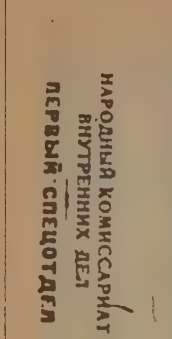
The first concentration camp in my Gulag biography in the autumn of 1938 was the Ustvymlag logging camp of an ordinary type that was characteristic of all the concentration camps of 1937-39. Though all these places of confinement felled and shipped out timber, actually they were death camps. All who did such physically-demanding jobs as the felling of timber were bound to die sooner or later from emaciation and conditions intolerable even for so enduring a biological specimen as the human being. I may make so bold as to say that not a single large mammal, be it cow, pig, goat or else, would stand up under conditions in which people lived for months, if not years, with even some surviving. I have been told, and it seems very true, that brainy Gulag vampires held that each prisoner in a concentration camp could slave away for at least three months and thereby somewhat foot the bill for his own destruction. When the three months were up his place would be taken by another prisoner as back in those years of slaughter trainloads of prisoners followed trainloads and the oversiding concern of the Gulag bosses was how to accommodate the new batches of prisoners. Of course, it was easy enough to start a new concentration camp, as a trainload could be deposited right out in the open taiga, with a section of forest encircled by barbed wire and look-out towers. However all that demanded an additional outlay, as it was necessary to build more huts, a canteen, a township for the service staff, etc. etc.

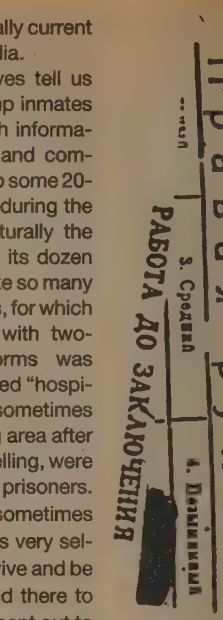
It was far simpler to channel prisoners through an already functioning concentration camp, where even new huts were not really necessary to house the growing number of incoming prisoners. I spent my first winter at the Ustvymlag camp in an ordinary tent, a huge long affair of canvas, with two tiered sleeping platforms made not even of boards, but of logs, and a stove in the middle contrived from an ordinary petrol drum. Though it glowed red-hot and it was impossible to stand near it, in the corners further away, snowdrifts that never melted accumulated. Naturally there was no bedding of any kind. It was so crowded that the prisoners had to sleep on their sides close to one another, which meant that they could turn only all together when the command rang out. Though these sleeping platforms were most uncomfortable with moreover just a chunk of wood for a pillow, we dropped off at once. What a blessing a prisoner dreams are, and what a nightmare it is to be woken up by the clanking of a hammer on a suspended length of rail at the entrance. The first thing you do is to rip away from bunk and canvas hair that had frozen to them in the night. In a book I've written, I noted that of our Moscow batch of 517 prisoners who





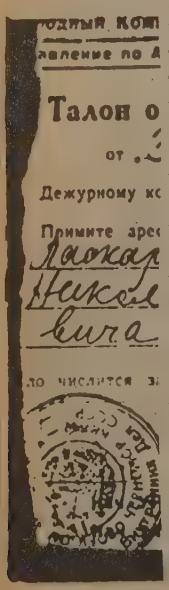






arrived in this camp in the autumn of 1938, only 22 had survived by the spring of the following year of 1939. The rest along with the hundreds who died later were buried in camp graveyards which will no doubt be impossible to discover today under the new taiga growth. Newcomers replaced the dead and hence all statistics as to the number of prisoners on this or that day are wrong since they fail to reflect the so rapid alternation.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn has aptly described his *Gulag Archipelago* as "an essay of researh" which is a credit to its author. It could not be anything else as it proceeded exclusively from accounts that were at times indirect, and his own personal experience which luckily for him did not amount to that much. It is my conviction that some time in the future a truly scholarly, documented research will be undertaken of a phenomenon that the world has never known. Genuine documents are already coming to light not because the KGB is today more liberal, but simply because the concentration camps were not directly subordinate to the NKVD. The Gulag was, in effect, a well-nigh automonous administration. When subsequently the NKVD divided into the Ministry of State Security and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the latter retained the Gulag, as the result of which camp dossiers were not sealed away in the strongboxes of the Ministry of State Security, but were deposited on the shelves of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, where it was far easier to get a look at them.



On the other hand what do they yield? Evidence of the life and death of concentration camp inmates? But they are as much bunk as all our statistics and reports are, nothing but padded plans and padded reports as to their fulfilment, even overfulfilment. Current once was an untranslatable punning rhyme to the effect that without padding and dynamite the notorious White Sea Canal would have never been built. No wonder, as padding for work never done was the backbone of concentration camp life. Without falsification it would have been impossible to keep the camp running and enable its bosses to hold on. But why mention that, when today we know that the "prosperity" under Stalin and his heirs was nothing but a tissue of lies. The huge factories that slave labour built did not function while the imported equipment did not yield even a tenth of the output it should have furnished. All official statistics were bunkum through and through, from the production of tooth brushes to the results of the nationwide census. The Russian concentration camp of "tufta" which means padding is now universally current in literature and the media.

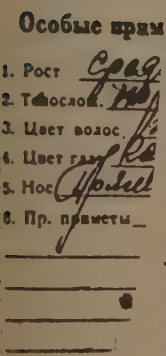
> It was essential to fill in "case histories" for all the hundreds of the dead rotting in the nameless graves and note the "lethal outcome"

Yet can these archives tell us how concentration camp inmates perished? There is such information, but it is immoral and completely false. In my camp some 20-30 prisoners died daily during the winter of 1938-39. Naturally the small hospital bay with its dozen or so cots, could not take so many sick and dying prisoners, for which reason one large hut with two-tiered sleeping platforms was converted into a so-called "hospital." Deposited there, sometimes straight from the feeling area after coming back from the felling, were the sick, or rather, dying prisoners. Sometimes they died the same day, sometimes lingered for another day or two. It was very seldom for one or another of them to survive and be transferred to the team of "weak" and there to build up enough strength to again be sent out to chop down trees. Naturally nobody examined, let alone, doctored these dying people; there was no pain in diagnosing these cases as there was nothing with which to treat them. Each morning the hospital registrar and the planning department listed how many "B-type" prisoners were to be "deleted" from the camp register. Thus were the deaths of prisoners recorded. Further the appropriate mark was made against the names of the prisoners whose corpses had already been conveyed to the camp graveyards. Every care was taken to see that figures tallied, as not a single prisoner could be "mislaid" within this vast Gulag empire of millions.

In the summer of 1939 the camp doctor, Alexander Zotov, himself a prisoner, asked some dozen people either engaged in felling or listed in the team of "weak" to report to the hospital bay. All dozen had in their dossiers the note that they had a higher college education. With Zotov was his chief, a medical assistant sporting the tabs of a junior lieutenant of state security. On the table before them was a huge pile of uncompleted dossiers each containing a large number of pages. The officer explained that the prisoners had to perform a task of state importance. It appeared that these were "case history forms" that had come from the central hospital administrtion and that were to be filled in, with respect to all the hundreds whose bones rotted in the nameless graves. Ending his brief statement of state significance, the officer went away leaving Zotov to explain things more simply. He said he had lists of dead prisoners, all that was known of whom were their surnames, Christian names, pat-

ronymics, years and places of birth, educational levels, articles of the criminal code under which charged, the terms to which sentenced, the start of each term, and the unfinished end, implying death. It was necessary, he said, to fill in the many pages of the "case history." Thus it was necessary to record under the appropriate heading what sort of maladies the person in question had been afflicted with in childhood and later on, when he had reported to the hospital bay, what he had complained of what symptoms had been detected, what skin and tongue were like, and what the initial diagnosis was before he was "hospitalized." To be described next was his week or more in the hospital, his daily medical checks and the medicines prescribed. It was to be stressed that despite all the care shown, the patient had grown weaker and weaker, until finally, notwithstanding all the measures taken, a "lethal outcome" had ensued. As a rule, the "pathologist's dissection" confirmed the initial diagnosis.

I must shamefacedly note that I too was involved in this vile immoral falsification. I had already spent most of the winter felling trees out in the forest and was dying of scurvy. That selfsame Dr Zotov saved me from death. However, I declined a life-saving job in the medical section, and was again dispatched to fell trees. I already felt I was growing weak again. Here now was an opportunity to goldbrick for two or three weeks inside the camp and moreover receive hospital meals. I never betrayed anyone before, would have even given up my life if needed. I say so openly, when noting this tragic episode of my Gulag biography.



However, at the time my comrades and I, in the selected team of "writer doctors," thought it not at all immoral, as usual goldbricking. Only much later did I realize I had betrayed not the living but the dead, thereby helping our enemies, our murderers. Though nearly 55 years have passed I still feel ashamed whenever I recall those goldbricking weeks in the summer of 1939. True, I always remember that as I can never forget anything of my Gulag biography.

As a result, the camp administration now had accurate documented proof that the prisoner had not simply given up the ghost due to intolerable work, but having fallen sick, had enjoyed all the blessings of modern medicine, with everything done to help him survive. One thing to Dr Zotov's credit is that in the "case card" he gave us, he did not invent any neutral cause of death, such as a stomach ulcer or a heart attack, but put it as "alimentary distrophy," which in plain language is death from starvation. That plus the date of death are the only true facts of this spurious document, which was then posted to Moscow, to gather dust in the NKVD's Gulag archives.

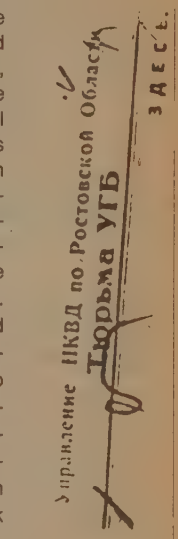
> Well visible during the white nights was every stoolie creeping along to see his patron."

So would it be possible when inspecting these vast still untouched archives to disclose the true story of how people lived and died in the Gulag? Believe it or not, but it is possible, as there are some documents there which tell the truth. These are documents from an institution feared most in the Gulag, the reports of Department Three as the Cheka operations section was briefly and illusively named. In fact that name well defines its place in the Gulag Archipelago. This section kept watch over prisoners, recruited informants from among them, laid "counter-revolutionary" charges against prisoners who were in the Gulag precisely for that. Its representative, the "operations' agent," whom the prisoners nicknamed the "in-law," a very rough translation for the Russian "kum," was to be found in each and every camp. Besides punishment block each camp necessarily had inside it a hut quasi-officially known as the "crafty house." It was indeed a small separately standing cabin of one or two rooms, where the "kum" was seated, plus a small cubicle for his orderly, a particularly trusted prisoner who spent all 24 hours of the day there. It also necessarily had two doors, one leading in, the other out, so that an incoming stoolie would not meet the outgoing stoolie or the prisoner summoned to be interrogated. True, all these artifices were superfluous, as well visible during the white nights was every stoolie creeping along to his "patron." For that matter, even the impenetrable dark of Arctic winter did not help, as these informants became known; no wonder the bosses allotted them work, where no pine tree would "inadvertently" crash down on their heads.

To sum up, this terrible institution, actually the NKVD inside the NKVD, maintained a Big Brother eye not only over prisoners, but also over the camp administration. It was mandated to report back to Moscow or to a closer higher instance, what really took place in the camp. That besides the frame-ups they concocted to intimidate and demonstrate "good work."

There are several such documents that I would like to comment upon. They are differently dated and are from different places, but they all provide an opportunity to learn what things were like in the Gulag straight from what we might term the "horse's mouth."

(To be continued)



A girl on a plane

Yaroslav Golovanov

Before blaming all our leaders for collectivization, industrialization, "maizification", I blame myself and all of us for letting them suppress the human beings in us and destroy our souls before they made the mess of our industry and agriculture...

I took my daughter along on a plane trip from Moscow to Chicago. An eleven-hour economy-class flight with two stopovers is a tryng experience even for a grown-up, let alone a two-year-old. Half an hour before we landed in New York, she fell into a deep sleep. It was 2 a.m. Moscow time, but I had to wake her up. Naturally, she burst into tears. The muddle and confusion of disembarkation over, we found ourselves behind a railing, in a stuffy tunnel, where we were kept for quite a while before finally being let out into the arrivals lounge. A system of metal stuncheons and ropes formed a labyrinth of sorts which turned a disorderly crowd into a long zigzagging line. The line, however, moved very slowly. The thing was that almost all the passengers of my flight were Jewish immigrants who had come to the US to stay, which complicated and slowed down passport control. Seeing a sobbing child, my ex-compatriots let us slip under the ropes, and as we "cut corners" this way we got closer and closer to the much coveted goal – a booth with a tired blue-uniformed gentleman in it reading, checking and stamping papers. That elderly gentleman was, perhaps, the only one whom the sobbing girl left totally cold, from which I concluded that all the frontier-guards the world over were cast in the same mould. This is how it should be, perhaps. I bore him no hard feelings for that.

My daughter was crying her heart out. Mountains of luggage had spilled over from the conveyer to the floor. It took me quite a while to find my bags to the accompaniment of my little girl's sobs. A lady customs officer looked at weeping Lyolka and reduced all the formalities to a minimum. I was to be picked up and taken to another airport – a domestic one – by a Soviet journalist. All I knew about him was his name and the fact that he wore a beard. He had my ticket to Chicago. In the lounge beyond the customs, the Jewish new arrivals were welcomed by crowds of bearded men. It was awfully hot and stuffy, and my daughter kept crying, weeping even. Words fail me to convey the despair I was in...

When I finally found "my" beard, I was so happy that I even kissed the man, a total stranger. We loaded my bags into his car drove over to the domestic airport, then unloaded the bags – all in a terrific hurry because my Chicago flight was already boarding. In a word, when we finally got into the Boeing, my shirt and even my jacket were soaked through with sweat. I barely managed to squeeze my handbag and the folding pram under the seat. We were awfully cramped for room. Lyolka, now in my arms, was too tired to cry on, so she merely whimpered. The plan started taxiing along the runway. And then...

A hostess arrived and, seeing me doubled up in my seat, relieved me of the pram and took it away to the first-class luggage compartment. Then she came back, bringing a small jar of apple juice. An old lady seated behind us stroked my daughter's head and gave her a stick of chewing-gum. A Soviet child with no previous experience of gum chewing, my daughter assumed it was a candy and began eating it. That worried the old lady a bit, but I didn't mind – let her eat the gum if tha stopped her crying! A black woman in front of us, with a black baby in her lap, offered me cotton baby pampers with a smile. Lyolka fell asleep in my arms. A bright beam of sunlight from the right-hand porthole fell on her face. I used a folded newspaper page as an improvised shade. Seated by the window were two athletic close-cropped young men, deep in their books. Having noticed my manipulations with the newspaper, they interrupted their reading, winked at me and pulled a thick dark-blue light filter over the window. The hostess reappeared and informed me there were three vacant seats in the back of the plane so the girl could have a seat to herself for a more comfortable sleep. I thanked her and explained I was very much afraid of waking her up and would rather she slept in my arms for the short duration of the trip. My left-hand neighbour, a man of fifty or so travelling with his teenage son, had the callous hands of a factory worker or a farmer – not of a pianist, anyway. Without saying a word, both rose and went to the back of the plane. Then the boy brought over a small pillow...

I swear to God that I haven't thought up any of these episodes. They puzzled me. Hadn't I been told, time and again, since my early childhood that "man to man was a wolf" there? But if that plane carried a pack of wolves, then my Lyolka must have been a Mawglie! Why, throughout an eleven-hour trip on board a Soviet plane, no one had come up and offered to help me with the

An American "support group": you are not alone in your distress

child? I still remember the line from Samuil Marshak's *Mister Twister*, part of my assigned reading back in school: "You are not in Chicago, my darling..." But it was only on that Chicago flight that the hidden irony of that line revealed itself to me. Demonstrating her patriotism, the wife of a famous Soviet writer used to say: "We are not in Paris, thank God." She was damn right, we weren't Paris, indeed! In our country, "man to man was a friend, a comrade and a brother." You know what the most terrible thing was? Not that the "brothers" had not offered to help me, but that I hadn't even expected them to do so! I hadn't counted on their cooperation because I knew that it was stupid to count on someone's support under the circumstances. This terrible knowledge is confirmed by the newspaper articles I read, and the letters I get, about the way our reality brutalizes people.

I wasn't much surprised to learn later that in the United States charity donations from various individuals, foundations and companies totals 100 billion dollars a year: no taxes are levied on this money, and it isn't too difficult to be generous when you live in plenty. On the other hand, we can't even afford our fill of potatoes, so who cares for charity. The Boeing passengers did not spend a cent on me, they just helped me a little, asking nothing in return. More than a half of the US adult population give almost five hours a week to charity, supporting the poor, cooking free lunches, looking after solitary old men and women, doing all the dirty work in hospitals, just hearing out total strangers' endless complaints. In the United States, these charity groups are referred to as "support groups". They take care not only of the sick and the hungry, although this is their chief concern. The name of some charitable societies may sound funny to us, but on reflection anyone will see that this is no laughing matter, that the victims of various human vices are in need of material, moral and spiritual support. "Gamblers Anonymous," "Spendthrifts Anonymous". "The National Association for Helping Obese Americans", "Gluttons Anonymous". And here are names which may strike you as not so funny "Depression Victims Anonymous", "Prostitutes Anonymous", "Alcoholics' Children". And not funny at all: "Rapists' Parents", "Cancer Cases"... "Whereas previously no one in America doubted the truth of the saying that 'one blind man cannot guide another', now that the 'support groups' are doing so well people are having second thoughts about such sayings," Vitaly Gan, *Pravda*'s own correspondent, wrote in his paper. "People get into trouble, find themselves in all sorts of awkward situations, have problems – all this is only human. But isn't it a consolation to know that you are not alone to have got into a scrape?" What I admire is not the fact that corporations, companies, foundations and wealthy businessmen donate 100 billion dollars to charity: it is easy for the rich to be generous. What I admire is the voluntary and disinterested work being done by all those "support groups" and individuals not affiliated with any groups – incidentally, their effort's estimated worth is also 100 billion dollars. The former 100 billion are just banknotes, "greenbacks", while the latter, invisible, intangible 100 billion are pure gold.

Helpfullness is a natural, perhaps inborn, and certainly cultivated quality of the American, irrespective of his or her position, education, religion, and so on. Notably, the American equivalent of our "everyday service establishments" answer to telephone calls is "Can I help you?" instead of "Hullo!" or "Yes?" (let alone our own maddeningly monotonous "Wait... Wait... Wait...")

If you unfold a city map in a street, two or three passers-by are bound to come up to you at once and ask whether you've lost your way and what place you'd like to get to.

As to policemen, they consider it their duty to be cooperative.

I recall an incident on a California-bound plane: in the cloudless sky over Grand Canyon, the pilot described a circle, rolling the machine from side to side so that all the passengers could enjoy the fantastic view.

On my first day in Chicago, I was surprised by the large number of men and women riding around in wheelchairs. "They've got plenty of invalids here," I said to myself – an idiotic observation, I admit. Later I realized that they do not outnumber us in invalids – rather on the contrary, because their health system is better than ours. The whole thing is that their invalids remain fully active on the city and national scene, while ours stay at home, have no wheelchairs, and are of no use to anyone anyway. Valentin Dikul, that man with a heart of gold, has set up the USSR Invalid Sports Federation, but that is a drop in the ocean. In the USA, invalids are to be seen at airports, railway stations, in theatres, museums; I saw a few paralytics being wheelchaired around Disneyland, which surprised no one but myself. The American invalid is not a pityful cripple to feel sorry for, he is a cheerful person enjoying and exercising every human right in full, a person to give a helping hand to rather than to pity – and this makes all the difference. Chicago invalids demanded that all the buses be fitted with special wheelchair lifts. The city fathers took their time about it saying that modifying hundreds of Chicago's buses for invalid use was a time-consuming and costly job. Chicago invalids grumbled, remonstrated with the governor, and journalists stepped in to support them. Now if an invalid has to go some place he has to make a reservation by phone a day in advance, and a minibus, fitted with a wheelchair lift, will pick him up right at his doorstep and get him there at an ordinary bus fare (1.25 dollars).

In central Chicago, all the sidewalks and pedestrian underpasses have special wheelchair and pram slopes and in parks, there are special bicycle, roller-skate and stakeboard tracks.

A blind man sells newspapers and magazines from a newsstand. It is easy to steal a few copies, of course. But who will steal from a blind man? And the blind man wants to work, so he has been given a job.

The Spanish sculptor Joan Miro presented Chicago with the figure of a woman 10 metres tall. Its pedestal is about knee high. On it, there is an exact replica of the figure, only a tiny one, scaled down to about 40 centimeters in height so that a blind person could feel it and imagine the work by the famous master.

The ground floor of the state governor's residence houses a large café serving the best hot dogs in town. The café – and, for that matter, the residence, right up to the governor's 16-floor office – is open to all. The café is tidied up by mentally retarded young people, victims of the Down's disease, who sweep the floor, wipe up the tables, put the chairs in place and take dirty dishes away. They are handicapped, but they are human beings and, therefore, have to be taken care of and given a job which is within their powers. Incidentally, they do this job as best they can.

There is the "pack of wolves" for you.

I anticipate your reaction, dear readers. You will tell me that being determines consciousness. That our people have been embittered by want, by hard work, or rather by the need to keep looking for means of subsistence. But I remember the Great War, when we were cold, hungry and scared but, nevertheless, kinder to one another, more attentive and friendlier. We had one common enemy then, and now we are like enemies to one another. I get this impression as I read articles by the film director Stanislav Govorukhin, the stage director Mark Zakharov, Metropolitan Filaret, the journalist Zoya Yeroshok, by other sincere and honest people. I was shocked to read Academician Shatalin's article in the *Komsomolskaya Pravda* which said, for instance: "The philosophy of plunder, social parasitism, loot sharing and violence, upstartness and plebeianism – has become alpha and omega of our existence. We live in a world of disintegrating personalities, unbridled passions, contempt for one another, misunderstanding of the fundamental problems involved in the development of civilization and culture – in fact, we live outside culture." As I read this, I begin to wonder whether our spiritual revival is possible at all. Is there at least a glimmer of hope for us? Daniil Granin told me about the children of Leningrad's Miloserdiye (mercy) society. They reject television, avoid newspapermen, save destitute and solitary old men and women from starving to death. I think I shall go and see them. If they object to publicity, all right, I'll just look them in the eyes. I want to see their eyes.

Before blaming all our leaders for collectivization, industrialization, chemicalization, maizification and other innovations which have ruined the world's richest country, I blame myself and all of us for allowing others (and even actively conniving with them) to suppress the human beings in us and destroy our souls before they made a mess of our industry and agriculture. I am not a statesman, and I do not know how to do it, but I know that our No.1 objective (our, I repeat, not our leaders' who will never cope with it) is not to achieve the American standard of maize production, but to attain the American standard of benevolence towards one another. If we hope to catch up with France in cheese production, Germany in beer production, and Canada in grain output at least by the time our great grandchildren reach maturity, we have to become kinder to start with. Malice will dry us up and drain away the strength we need for work. Hate will cripple our children. We are in for a horrible future. Even an orthodox like Maxim Gorky, "the stormy petrel of the revolution," felt this in his time. "It seems to me," he wrote, "that not even in a hundred years from now but much earlier life will be much more tragical than the one tormenting us today. It will be more tragical because, as it always happens following social catastrophes, people, tired of insulting pushes from the outside, will be compelled to look into their inner world, to ponder, once again, over the aim and meaning of life." Well, isn't it time we looked and pondered? I am afraid for the girl sleeping in my arms on a plane. Govorukhin is quite right in saying that this cannot go on. ■

Excesses of the "cultural revolution"

Sergei Toroptsev

In 1966 the situation in China was so tense that every day brought news. Now, 25 years later, it can be said that, disregarding the hardships of 1966, those who witnessed its dramatic events were lucky. China vehemently defended its socialist choice. It was not yet clear in 1966 what sacrifice was made in this struggle. Millions of people lost their lives and millions shrank away with fear under the pressure of "Marxism-Leninism and Mao's thoughts" (or Maoism, as it was proclaimed in those days). However, "ideological purity" does not bring happiness or civilization to the people. This was proved once again by events in China in the period after the cultural revolution and reaffirmed by tragic events in 1989 which reminded one of the threat of going back 25 years.

In 1966 I worked in the Soviet trade mission in Beijing and was an eye-witness of "revolutionary" events. Below are excerpts from the diary I kept at that time.

"We'll give you hell." A leaflet with this threat was pasted up on a wall near the Soviet embassy in Beijing 25 years ago

1 June 1966. Tne end of spring – intoxicating, full of emotions and heavy aroma, without northern crispness, beautiful, rich, confident, and quiet as summer.

It suddenly became cool on the first day of summer in Beijing. The wind grew stronger and shook the trees. In the evening the stars were covered by clouds and the earth was plunged into uneasy darkness.

Today's *Renmin ribao* carries a "fervent" slogan, "Mao's thoughts, having been learned by the masses, become an atom bomb." It will be recalled that an atom bomb was labelled by Chinese leaders as a "paper tiger".

2 June. "When the earth perishes and the sun explodes contradictions will remain in the universe nevertheless," *Renmin ribao* writes ominously. The following law of the jungle is advanced as a Marxist one: "If you do not devour me I shall devour you."

5 June. People with banners, drums and gongs demonstrated in the central part of the city yesterday. They resembled a funeral procession. To the measured beating of drums and gongs a column of people with sad faces slowly carried a portrait of Mao decked with red ribbons. The demonstration was held on the occasion of the dismissal of Beijing's city party leaders, and today, on June 5, it is breaking up and people are going to different parts of the city.

A rather influential army newspaper predicts new clashes: "After the abolition of one black line (of policy) a new line will appear." A conventient label for objectionable people.

9 June. A street scene: in the evening all the members of a family went out on the pavement. They are sitting on low stools. At their feet is a round vessel with clews of wool in it. The mother is sorting out wool and the daughter helps her while father is knitting with the aid of five needles. A peaceful idyll.

11 June. I keep ringing up the film distribution office. Someone carefully listens to my request for a meeting and promises to "clear up the question". Then he disappears. Next day I hear a new voice, equally polite, mysterious, and of no use.

17 June. "Hello, is this the film distribution service?" I hear the reply: "No, it is a cinema." The telephone number has been changed. I dial a new number. The man on the other end of the line answers politely: "Everyone is at a meeting now. I will certainly report your request."

Along the streets are mimosa trees, called here an eternally blooming plant. They have broken out into blossom, with funny-looking globular heads of pink flowers.

20 June. I again phone to the film distribution service. "We have a meeting today," replies a man on the other end. "May I ring up tomorrow?" I asked. "tomorrow we shall not have a meeting."

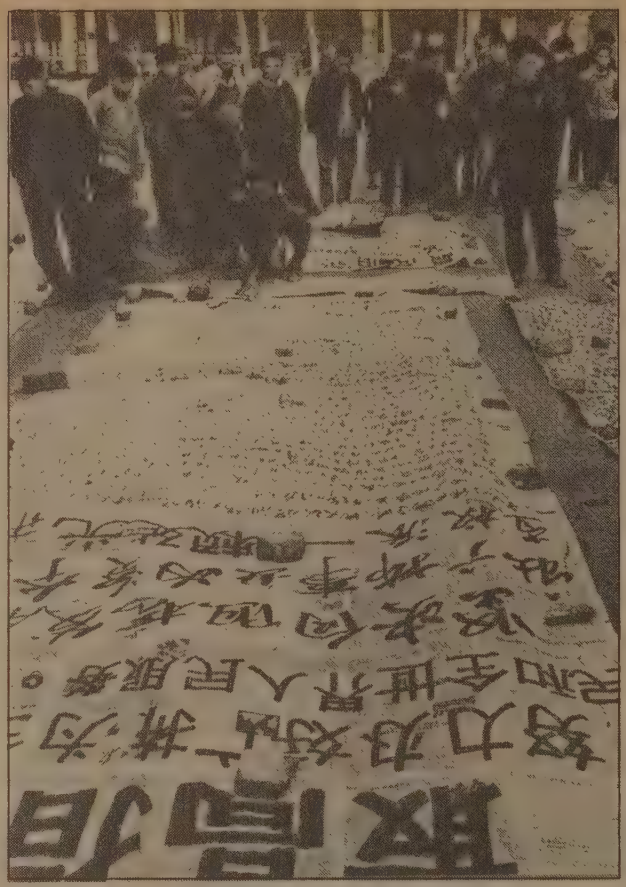
25 June. Meetings are still going on in the film hire service. The newspaper *Renmin ribao* attacks the revisionists who "regard production as a priority task."

20 July. A terrible 30-day period of maximum humidity and calm begins. According to tradition, people can eat only meat dumplings, noodles,

pancakes and omelettes during this time. However, they cannot afford to keep this tradition.

24 July. Water-melons are sold everywhere in the streets. The "theoretical basis" for the selling of water-melons is set forth in a profound article entitled *The philosophy of selling water-melons*. Its author, referring to Mao, asserts that it is necessary to "concentrate superior forces and annihilate the enemy piecemeal." And so they are done away with piecemeal. A salesman gets a melon from a barrel with ice, cuts it and sells it piece by piece.

28 July. An incident happened near the Soviet embassy. A woman threw herself under the wheels of an embassy Volga car. She was standing not far from the embassy gates and stepped forward when the driver sharply put on the brakes. The woman lay at such a distance from the radiator that it was obvious – she imitated an accident. A crowd of people gathered quickly. The woman raised herself a little and saw that her attempt failed, and she crept up on all fours nearer to the car. Policemen drew up a protocol, cutting short the evidence of "unnecessary" eye-witnesses.



One of the posters urges the Chinese to "extirpate poisonous weeds"

30 July. Nine o'clock in the evening. One can hear the rhythmic beating of drums and gongs. Columns of demonstrators are marching. In front of the column is Mao's portrait decked with ribbons and behind it are dozens of red banners. Citizens of Beijing are celebrating Mao's swimming in the Yangzi River two weeks ago. It was announced then that Mao swam 15 kilometres in one and a half hour, simultaneously talking with a girl and teaching her to swim. This means that he swam at a speed of 200 metres a minute, whereas the world record is slightly more than a minute on the 100 metre distance. A well-known Australian woman swimmer noted on this occasion that the world had not yet seen such a great swimmer of all times or perhaps their clock had stopped.

4 August. Two men are leading a woman of about 40 years of age, tightly gripping her hands. The woman, in torn clothes, looks emaciated. Her tense face is distorted with fear. The crowd behind is silent.

5 August. An employee of the film hire service keeps replying to my calls that the staff have been holding meetings for the second month and therefore they can neither meet with me, nor take new Soviet films.

In the Wangfujing Street the following notice hangs on the doors of the shop of scientific and technical literature: "We are having a meeting today. The shop is closed for one day." I saw it for the first time a week ago. In November the yellowed sheet still hung on the closed doors.

6 August. A Chinese driver employed by the Soviet trade mission comes up to its supply manager and says: "I have used a bicycle of your mission and now I have bought my own. Thank you, I shall return your bicycle next Monday." It's fine, the man lives well and saved money for a bicycle.

A little later, however, another Chinese worker comes up to the mission's supply manager. "I don't need a bicycle any longer. It's hot and I shall go by bus now." Let us believe that it is cooler in a crowded bus.

In short, all Chinese employees of the mission returned their bicycles. Of course, it was not a prearranged action on their part. They had been "prompted" to do that by opponents of "revisionist benefits." A little earlier the Chinese employees refused to accept bonuses. They could not be superfluous in view of their poor life. Nevertheless, the Chinese did not take bonuses with tears in their eyes.

10 August. Demonstrations in support of yesterday's decision of the party's central committee on "the furthering of the cultural revolution" are taking place in all parts of Beijing.

I hear the howling of the crowds of fanatics. It joins with a general appeal: "Ten thousand years of life for Chairman Mao."

A pink cloud swimming on the grey-blue dusk sky betokened a storm. The sky around it was absolutely quiet. Lightning flashed in the pink cloud, but only within its bounds.

12 August. Scientific journals are closed one after another. Today we have received notices on the return of money for 27 periodicals. Explanations for the cessation of publication are not given. But in one of the journals we found an announcement for readers inside the country: "For the purpose of meeting the persistent demands of the people who want to study the works of Chairman Mao we shall concentrate our forces in the near future on the speedy publication of these works. The Medical Society of China, July 1966."

13 August. Newspapers enthusiastically report that in the evening of August 10 Mao "met with revolutionary masses of the people." He waved at them and, as the *Xinhua* news agency reports, uttered "inspiring words": "Good evening, comrades." Some people from the crowd managed to come closer and then yelled with rapture: "Shake my hand. I have just shaken the hand of Chairman Mao."

14 August. Yesterday Beijing radio kept the people in suspense from morning to afternoon. Every hour its announcers solemnly pronounced: "Important news will be broadcast at 5.00 pm". At five o'clock the radio made an announcement about the just closed plenum of the party's central committee, which adopted a decision on the "cultural revolution."

At 5:15 pm columns of people flowed to the stadium in an orderly manner for a public rally. For the second evening a hoarse bellow resounded through the city: "Ten thousand years of life ... one hundred million years of life for Chairman Mao." At the mention of the divine name the fanatical crowd flew into a frenzy. Mao's portrait decorated with flowers was carried through the streets of Beijing.

The demonstration ended and the columns of people broke up. Those who carried the portrait took it away, proud of their responsibility. When it began drizzling they wrapped the portrait in transparent film, though they did not have raincoats.

19 August. A mammoth rally took place in Beijing's central square yeasterday. Mao Zedong "met with pioneers of the great cultural revolution". The head of state, Liu Shaoqi, is only eighth in the protocol list for some reason. A new organization inspired by Mao has appeared. Its members are

called hongweibings. The word was translated by the *Xinhua* news agency as red guards.

20 August. A "spontaneous movement of the people" has burst out. Its members began first of all to change the names of streets and squares objectionable to them. Changanjie (Eternal Peace), the main avenue passing through Tiananmen Square, was renamed the Avenue of Communism, and Tiananmen Square (Gates of Heavenly Peace) became the East is Red, after the first words of the song worshipping Mao. The well-known merchant street, Wangfujing (Well of a Prince's Yard) became Revolutionary Street and the covered market Dunan (Eastern Peace) situated in it was also given a new name, Dongfend, or the Wind from the East (which, according to Mao, "prevails over the wind from the West"). The street leading to the Soviet embassy (called Yangweilu, or the Lauding of Authority) was renamed Anti-Revisionist and the restaurant Moscow became an Anti- Revisionist canteen.

To the rhythmic beating of a drum children of an obviously kinder-garten age are carrying a huge portrait of the leader decorated with a trite hieroglyph translated as "double happiness."

21 August. During one night the walls of houses and the roadway near the Soviet embassy gates were pasted with catchy slogans which play up the former name of the street. "Whose authority is lauded?" The slogans were pasted by girls from a nearby school, but the phrases were strewn with words which are usually omitted in our literature. The posters demanded that "revisionist dogs must be thrown out of our red China". Boys are shouting from the pavement: "Revisionists, revisionists." In exactly the same way their fathers exclaimed in the past: "The Soviet elder brothers".

22 August. A huge board with Mao's portrait has been put up in the middle of the Revisionist Street in which, let me remind you, the Soviet embassy is situated. A crowd of people who gathered round the board demand that cars stop and passengers pass by the portrait on foot. An imperial ritual. The Soviet diplomats did not obey the demand. As a result, all reception at the embassy were foiled.

The walls of all buildings in Beijing are pasted from top to bottom with manifestos, revolutionary orders, and simple notices printed in shops or on stencil duplicators and inscribed by grease pencils or in black ink. They call for a revolutionary transformation, the "overthrow of the old world" and the "eradication of revisionism." The old stone lions and stelae in the yards and traditional twin inscriptions on gates have been declared the feudal legacy to be eliminated within three days. From now on the previous name of matches, "yanghuo" (overseas fire), cannot be used and the names like the "golden Fish Lane" must be changed as "not reflecting the present-day revolutionary spirit." The philatelic shop has been closed. Red guards came to the disc shop and demanded that only records of revolutionary music should be sold and that the people's minds should not be "befuddled" with pieces like Swan Lake.

Cyclists are distributing leaflets. Our Chinese driver took one. When we asked him to show it to us he whispered after some hesitation: "You'd better not see it." Someone threw a handful of small stones into the windscreen of a car with a diplomatic licence plate. Many leaflets and posters contain abusive words the most decent of which is *huaidan* (a rotten egg, identical with a scum). One of the slogans says: "We are red guards who defend Chairman Mao (not even his "thoughts" but his personality, a sort of imperial guard). A warning has been put up on a wall near the Soviet embassy: "We'll give you hell." The foreign ministry did not pay heed to our protest. People in the crowd begin to throw stones at us.

23 August. At seven o'clock we were awakened by the roaring of the crowd. There were children three or four years of age in an organized column permitted by police to come up to the very fence. They could not even read the "anti-revisionist" slogans which they held in their hands. A young man was distributing leaflets. People attacked those lucky ones who had managed to grab several copies.

People are breaking stone lions in yards or simply chopping their noses off. In one of the yards books were burned in a fire. Embittered boys around eleven years of age led a grey-haired intelligent-looking woman, spitting at her all the time. In the hardware shops, almost empty only yesterday, people are lining up to buy paints in order to write slogans. Most of them buy paints for their organizations, but there are also those who buy them for their own purposes. One of the leaflets stated the rights and duties of red guards, including the duty to "check the presence of quotations from and portraits of Chairman Mao in each yard and family."

24 August. An, ultimatum has been pasted up throughout the city. All members of "reactionary classes and groups" are obliged to wear special signs on the breast.

Overgrown schoolchildren are shouting in front of the Soviet embassy gates: "Down with revisionism." A pretty little girl, standing at some distance from them, is muttering obscenities in the windows of passing diplomatic cars.

26 August. The term set by the red guards for "squaring accounts with the past" has ended. Violent raids and arrests began in the city. Red guards are going from house to house with specially drawn up lists. They rebuke those who do not have quotations from and portraits of Mao in their homes. The newspaper *Renmin ribao* described these actions as "absolutely revolutionary and lawful."

Crowds or red guards gathered in the square of the railway station. They had apparently come from the provinces to adopt the "revolutionary experience" in Beijing. Girls are cutting off each other's long black luxuriant plaints. The asphalt is strewn with hair like a field with straw during harvest.

A customs official is writing a leaflet in the railway station building. Asked whether he was doing that at the request of his organization, he said that it was his own initiative.

29 August. Long preparations in front of the embassy gates are to culminate in a mass rally with the participation of people from other towns. It is not a spontaneous action, of course. Leaflets distributed throughout the city called on people to gather at eight o'clock in the morning. Traffic in the district had been closed. "Anti-revisionist" slogans were already shouted in a hoarse voice at night, at half past three. Loudspeakers, set at maximum volume, were directed towards the embassy. Some broadcast a hysterical speech, the second a song praising Mao, and the third an even more "revolutionary" (that is, louder) song.

In the morning, at someone's command, the loudspeakers were switched off and the embassy was fenced off from the crowd by a portrait of placid Mao against the blue background. A portrait of Khrushchev was put up on the wall of a house on the other side of the street and people began to throw stones at it.

30 August. The rally was banned, but the loudspeakers continued to yell all night: "You are scared, trembling with fear in your offices. Ten thousand years of life for Chairman Mao." Erasmus of Rotterdam once noted that fools overestimate the power of icons. German diplomats were beaten. The Chinese apologized later. They took them for Russians.

31 August. Leaflets are still pasted throughout the city, but life is getting back to normal. Only small inactive groups have remained of the demonstrations. Shops are reopening.

One leaflet expresses discontent with the state anthem of China because it was written by "a bourgeois element," Tian Han by name, and suggests replacing it with the song *The East is Red*.

In the opinion of Japanese correspondents, the August 30 rally which brought together more than 200,000 red guards was the height of the campaign and later the "cultural revolution" will be conducted by the media while terror and endless meetings will subside.

* * *

They were mistaken. It was difficult for them, living in a democratic society, to understand that the socialist choice can be defended only by arms. This has been proved by the subsequent ten years of the "cultural revolution", the shooting of protesters in Tiananmen Square in 1989, as well as by events in Budapest, Prague, Tbilisi, and Vilnius.

There were deaths in almost all the films

The Moscow Film Festival mirrored our mentality

Neya Zorkaya

The concluding press conference of the 17th Moscow Film Festival was started in the spirit of the times – with a Soviet film market review. General Director Oleg Rudnev named the films which had found their buyers (with *Satan* topping the list), quoted the worth of each contract signed and the receipts from the sales made (in dollars). We were rather surprised to learn that most of the Soviet pictures had been purchased by the Republic of Cyprus.

Ambrose Eichenberger, Chairman of the Christian Ecumenical jury panel, described the cinema as "a means of communication, of expressing spiritual, cultural, religious, and social values essential for the development of new forms of community life, of reflecting God's image in man." The jury awarded its prize to the film which answered this definition best – *The Piebald Dog Running on the Edge of the Sea* by the director Karen Gevorkian (USSR), singled out the pictures *Walerjan Wrobel's Nostalgia* (FRG), *Get Away* (USSR), and gave special credit to the programme of documentaries called *The Urals' Phenomenon* (The Sverdlovsk Studio, USSR).

The jury panel of the FIPRESSI (International Federation of the Cinematographic Press), chaired by Marcel Martin, a celebrated Franch film critic, awarded its prize to director Karen Gevorkian for his *The Piebald Dog Running on the Edge of the Sea* and noted the debut made by the Kazakh director A.Karakumov (*Twin Brothers' Separation*).

The *Ekran* magazine's award went to the young Czechoslovak director Irena Pavlaskova for the promising beginning she made in *Time of Servants;* the International Film Clubs' jury gave the first prize to the Chinese competition film *The Wedding Maidens; The Piebald Dog Running of the Edge of the Sea* received the jury's special prize.

Oleg Yankovsky's team

The press-conference culminated in the main jury trooping up to the stage in full, and its chairman, Oleg Yankovsky, announcing that it had awarded the Grand Prize to *The Piebald Dog Running on the Edge of the Sea* (USSR); a special prize, "ex aequo" (fifty-fifty) to the *Insurance Agent* (Canada) and *The Wedding Maidens* (China); the Best Actress prize to Isabelle Huppert (*Madame Bovary,* France); the Best Actor prize, "ex aequo" to Mustafa Nadarevic and Branislav Lecic (both starring in *Silent Gunpowder,* Yugoslavia). The jury commended the Mexican movie *Home Assignment* for audacity, as the chairman put it. In conclusion he announced something unheard of at our film festivals: the jury had awarded the directors of the three above-mentioned films – Atom Egoyan (Canada), Wang Jin (China) and Jaime Humberto Hermosillo (Mexico) – a million rubles each in aid of their further efforts.

The announcement stirred up pandemonium. From the audience, there came shouts of: "That's a pittance, movie costs five million to make at the cheapest!" "What are they going to do with all those wallpaper rubles?" and so on, and so forth. Unruffled Oleg Yankovsky explained that the situation in our country being different from what it used to be, they could always come over and make movies in the USSR.

Notably, the Grand Jury's decision struck the audience, which had applauded the previous juries, as strange. The Canadian *Insurance Agent,* a rather foolish story of what happens in a clerk's family, did not go down well either with the critics or with the Festival audiences. The division of the Best Actor prize between two male leads of the Yugoslav film – good as they were – also came as a surprise against the background of the Festival's star-studded programme and considering Max von Sydow's brilliant performance in the Australian *Father.* However, Yankovsky's jury, as closely-knit as a football team, reported their decision in a confident tone.

"There were no masterpieces," said Dusan Makavejev, "but the Festival itself was a masterpiece to us because it opened a window on the world."

From the film *Don Juan in the Infernoes* (Spain)

This outstanding movie-maker from Yugoslavia shared some of his precise and profound observations. "We have drawn interesting conclusions from the Festival. There were deaths in almost all the films – in the Chinese picture five girls committed suicide, and in some others – the Dutch and Swiss ones – characters had died some time in the past, and their presence on the screen was posthumous, as it were. The Festival reflects our mentality. We are now going through a disaster – the demise of the communist idea. We are in confusion, and we do not know what the future has in store for us. We are being born anew, and birth is always painful." "These

sad and dramatic films which are sometimes difficult for us to see too, mirror the ills of the whole world, not of any one country," the French actress Michèle Mercier added.

Indeed, the tragic past and its bitter lessons have been the leit-motif of many films. The evil of totalitarianism, the wound, still gaping, inflicted on the world by fanatical leaders, hatred and mutual hostility, the value of human life and the human individual, however modest – these ever pressing problems of the outgoing 20th century attract artists again and again.

An absurd babyish face, a close-cropped, once redhaired head behind bars, a funny teenager in a shapeless prison garb, the shocking contrast between "civilized" and self-assured evil and one ruined fragile life... The German film, *Walerjan Wrobel's Nostalgia,* takes us back to the year 1941 when a 16-year-old Polish boy was deported to Germany along with thousands of Eastern slaves. In the film *Father* a woman looks for a Nazi who once assassinated her family and, her moral duty fulfilled, commits suicide, thus shifting the burden to the daughter of the murderer she has found: past crimes leave a trail.

These motives, collisions, and circumstances have now assumed a special novelty, no doubt. This is evident in the special emphasis on the theme of the evil-doers' ever-lasting responsibility for their crimes, in the rejection of the conciliatory "statute of limitations," in concentration on the sources and pockets of hostility, violence and evil.

It hurts us Soviet people to see that the world cinema finds such sources of war and malice not only in Hitlerism but also in the Communist actions which accompany the key events of the age. The film *Silent Gunpowder* looks from a new and unexpected angle at the long idealized and mythologized wartime guerrilla movement in Yugoslavia. A small mountain village in Bosnia is a microcosm of the entire country enveloped in the flames of war. In it, anti-Nazi fighters clashed with irrepressible Communist forces inciting the peasants to a civil war under the implied motto: "Let us kindle a worldwide fire!" Two leaders – the chief of the local mountaineers and the Communist commissar nicknamed "Spaniard" personify two opposite camps; they are compatriots, brothers, crippled by the "silent gunpowder" of hate. In this sense, the division of the Best Actor prize in two is meaningful – a parallel with the current developments in Yugoslavia suggested itself and figured in reviews. The nickname "Spaniard" is not accidental; neither is the image of a fanatical "Spanish woman" in a kind of a communal junta, a terrorist group in the Swiss film *From Here to Eternity.* It looks as if the cinema is going to debunk another great myth of the 20th century – Spain, 1937, i.e. the revolution, the international brigades; incidentally, the myth has already taken quite a beating from fiction and memoirs writers.

All this is history. What about the present day? Barbed wire, watch-towers, armed guards – the sinister shadow of Oswiecim and GULAG archipelago still lies on the modern world – it is not by chance that in several films (Polish *The Bet,* Korean *The Way to Chongsong)* the scene is set in corrective camps and prisons.

The cinema is raising its voice against any manifestations of social evil, hate, and ethnic feud: *Get Away* exposes anti-Semitism, and *Viola la liberté!* (Hungary) – the "post-socialist" commercial madness in the former "socialist countries."

The Moscow Film Festival's old motto "For Humanism in Cinema Art, for Peace and Friendship among Nations" has been replaced by a playful "Hi, Actor of the World!" That's a pity. "Old" does not always mean "junk to be discarded." The 17th Moscow Film Festival was more in tune with that old motto than any of its predecessors.

Sex

The Mexican film *Home Assignment,* to which the jury has awarded a prize "for audacity," is an experiment in an "erotic comedy." Its story is funny, indeed: assigned to make a film, a woman student of a TV direction course decides on a sex act scene shot with a hidden camera. The act is performed by the woman student herself and an ex-lover of her specially invited to play the partner.

The movie sparkles with humour and wit, but, really, haven't we had enough of that? To my mind, the Mexicans' "audacity" lies in holding the "bedroom theme" up to ridicule. Nevertheless, the film, while raising a lot of laughs, balances on the brink of "double entendre."

The sex stress, with "eroticism" hardly distinguishable from "porno," continues on the world screen. Even the greatest masters (Bernardo Bertolucci, for instance) are becoming ever more "risqué." "We are not hypocrites," the selection commission seemed to imply, and moral censorship, once unbearable, gave way to full permissiveness. With all my sympathies for the sex minorities' fight for their rights, isn't it a bit too much to present the Apostles and Christ himself as members of such a minority, as does the British film *The Garden?*

Although Madonna did not turn up in Moscow, she did take two hours of the Festival's screen time, in the finale, by her sex confessions garnished with lewd obscenities.

Fortunately, Sophia Loren, who arrived for the closing day of the Festival, came like a breath of fresh air in that stifling "sex shop" atmosphere with her beauty, charm and her dazzling dress.

Karen Gevorkian's triumph

All the four Grand Prizes were taken by Karen Gevorkian's film *The Piebald Dog Running on the Edge of the Sea* – a screen version of Chinghiz Aitmatov's story of the same name. Let me explain to those who have neither seen the film, nor read the story that they are not about a dog because Piebald Dog is the name of a seaside cliff in the unique highly distinctive language of the Nivkhs, a small people living in the Far East.

No pressure was put on the Festival from "the top," and Yankovsky made that clear from the start. With our current passion for self-disparagement, the jury could not be suspected of excessive patriotism. On the contrary, I know from reliable sources that the Soviet judges – of all others – were a bit embarrassed by the foreigners' universal and unanimous admiration of Gevorkian's film.

In this truly remarkable, unique film some saw "a parable on the survival of our endangered planet likened to a small people fighting for existence"; others, "unusual ethnographic material, technical and artistic skill"; still others, "the development of the best traditions of the Soviet cinema of the twenties," "a feat of extraordinary courage performed by the film director who lived among those people, shared their hardship, and came to know all about them," "the pinnacle of the cinema art"; these are quotations from the juries' verdicts and from critical reviews.

Karen Gevorkian is 50 today. A cameraman by training, and a gifted film director by vocation, he had a hard life in the "stagnation period" when his films were often banned, shelved, and mutilated. Nevertheless, he has remained himself.

Very handsome and all but blushing, he stood on the stage of the Rossiya concert hall, loaded with his "souvenirs of glory". Congratulations!

Behind this No.1 prize-winner, there stands Soviet cinema-90. "Amazingly, it has risen in almost no time. Its brief obsession with porno and 'hyper-realism' is gone. It has assumed a new quality," said the French film critic Marilyn Fellous in the hall of the Film Centre where the Soviet programme had been shown until the last day of the Festival. The audience applauded its agreement.

A historical scholar can write "the warrior wore a leather shirt trimmed with scales," and this would be correct. But it's impossible to put on or take off a leather shirt – the shoulders don't fit through. What can be done? Cut it open? But the coat of mail in the engraving seems like one piece. The puzzle is not entirely unsolvable: it turns out that the plates are connected to each other by leather straps.

Such historical riddles are solved by the senior fellow of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, **Mikhail Gorelik.** He creates his own army of reconstructed warriors and simultaneously dispels the numerous historical myths which fill school books.

In these books is written in black and white that the West European warriors of the 13th century, when clad in coats of mail, weighed much more than the Russian warriors. Ostensibly for this reason the Novgorod troops of Prince Alexander Nevsky defeated the Livonian Knights in 1242. Gorelik discovered that this was not so. Another delusion: in 1243 the Mongolians defeated the Russians because they had light cavalry. But a Mongolian coat of mail has not yet been found. Having studied Persian miniatures and Tibetan coats of mail, Gorelik reconstructed Mongolian coats of mail. Then it was discovered that the Mongolian mail was heavier than the West European one.

For 10 years already museums of the country have been ordering exhibits – replicas – from Gorelik. Weapons masters gathered around Mikhail. They use natural raw materials for their replicas; only brass is substituted for gold. Gorelik sketches coats of mail and the masters make them. For the first time, the ancient objects reconstructed by Gorelik were gathered at the small enterprise, owned by *New Times,* in the exhibition–presentation organized by the industrial association "Soyuzenergoservis" and assisted by the Association of Medieval Military Art.

G. Rezanov,
T. Khoroshilova

* * *

Translating – a dangerous profession

"I pay no attention to them," commented **Hitoshi Igarashi,** author of the Japanese translation of the *Satanic Verses,* when asked in an interview about the Arab protests against the publication in Japan of Salman Rushdie's notorious book. Almost a year after the book's release, the 44-year-old assistant professor at Tsukuba University became the victim of a cruel and mysterious murder. July 12, 1991 his body was found on a staircase landing in one of the university buildings. The body had multiple wounds, and the face, neck, arms and even his briefcase had been slashed. It is still unclear why he appeared at the university during summer vacation.

Hitoshi Igarashi was widely known in Japan as an expert on Islam. The subject of his many years of research was the Koran and its role in the political and economic life of the Arab world. He was an honorary member of the Iranian Academy of Philosophy and the author of several books, including *The Islamic Renaissance.*

The Japanese police are conducting an investigation and are still unable to confirm that the "cutting implement" in the hand of the murderer symbolized the "guarding sword of Allah."

At the same time, an unsuccessful search is under way in Italy for the "author" of a similar attempt. Representatives of the Iranian consulate say that it is unknown whether or not the man who translated *The Satanic Verses* into Italian, professor **Ettore Capriolo,** was seriously wounded. A "diplomat" deceived Capriolo and gained entry into his Milan apartment, and then tried to extract information from the professor about the whereabouts of Salman Rushdie. Capriolo answered that he was not personally acquainted with the author of the book who was declared an "enemy of Islam" by Ayatollah Khomeini. The guest then pulled out a dagger and struck Capriolo several serious blows to the chest, shoulders and face. After this he successfully vanished. Drenched in blood, Ettore Capriolo was rushed to the nearest hospital in a state of shock. Now he is recovering slowly.

The Italian translator of *The Satanic Verses* is 65 years old. He is a great specialist in the history of theatre, and he teaches at the Milan School of Dramatic Arts, named after Paolo Grassi. He worked for many years with the large publishing company Mondadori and translated more than seventy books for them, among them the works of Ernest Hemingway, John Le Carre, and other authors. Not long ago Capriolo finished his translation of the latest book by Salman Rushdie.

The Italian police only two months ago cancelled the protection of Capriolo, which had been intiated after several threatening phone calls.

And so the chain of "retaliatory acts" continues. Rushdie remains as inaccessible as before, and his translators have become the victims of fanatics.

The A. Sakharov Order of Mercy and Social Protection requests help. The 33-year-old pianist and music teacher from Severodvinsk, **Marina Sidorova,** still performing solo piano concerts accompanied by symphony orchestra, was the public's favourite. But three years ago she contracted encephalitis. The young woman began to develop spastic fits.

The investigation and treatment in the scientific research institutes of Kharkov and Kiev, in the Bekhterev Research Institute for Experimental Medicine in Leningrad, and in the Neurological Research Institute in Moscow yielded no results. The causes of the disease have not been discovered, and so there is no way to treat the disease. At present Marina is a second-class invalid. But the tragedy is not just that the illness causes purely external physical damage. In Marina's case, it is accompanied by excruciating pain which makes it impossible for her not only to work, but also to move and sleep normally. Now Marina is on the verge of physical exhaustion.

Her parents have discovered that in Germany there is a clinic which specializes

in the treatment of rare cases of such diseases. But the Ministry of Health of the Soviet Union cannot send Marina there because it has no hard currency.

The Order of Mercy asks for help from all who are able to give. Our ruble account: Vneshtorgbank of the Russian Federation, account number 100809. Hard currency donations can be directed to Vneshekonombank of the USSR, account number 87090906/002 for Marina Sidorova.

* * *

The head of the department of preventive service of the Interior Ministry of the USSR, 44-year-old Colonel **Alexander Chekalin,** was one of the first people who began to develop the structures of service for the prevention and curtailing of breaking the law in the sphere of social morality, otherwise known as the moral police.

Chekalin applied to the organs of internal affairs immediately after he completed his army service. He worked as the head of the Frunzensky department of internal affairs in Moscow. Many troubles befell him, especially in the "Bermuda Triangle" – between the hotels National, Moskva and Intourist. When he was invited to take part in founding the moral police, Chekalin had no reservations.

All the activity of the moral police is based on the Law on the Soviet Militia, says Chekalin. The people directly engaged in this activity will be preventive inspectors who will be specially trained. In places where such a duty won't be necessary, that work will be carried out by local militia officers.

The department of preventive service considers as a breach of public morality the production and sale of pornography, writings propagating violence and cruelty, harbouring criminals, abuse of minors and prostitution. In a word, everything that the regular militia has been trying to eradicate for decades.

I. Zharkikh

* * *

41-year-old **Howard Baten** of the US is a clown and a psychiatrist. Not only is he a violin virtuoso, he is also a contortionist who can fall down for laughs. Howard has a key to the world of autistic children. For children suffering from this disease, isolation and strong alienation from the outside world are characteristic.

Once, when 16-year-old Howard was looking for work during vacation, he found a job at a camp for autistic children. The young man was so struck by what he saw that he decided to go to work in a special school for such children.

In spite of all warnings and medical recommendations, he began imitating the gestures of the children, communicating with them in a language of gestures which they understood. Baten has reached the conclusion that "autistics are clowns – or the reverse, clowning is the only way to portray autism."

The causes and progression of this mysterious disease remain inaccessible to doctors and psychologists. There is a children's fairy tale which tells how on a clear night mythical elves descend to the earth. The elves fall in love with the most beautiful human children and carry them to their world. So the cradles won't be empty in the morning, the elves put their own children in them.

Baten doesn't believe in fairy tales; he just works with children, for free. True, in America and Europe Howard is better known as "Buffo." Buffo writes books and puts on shows. "Art," says Baten, "is something wonderful. It can do a lot... but it's also important who talks with whom, who feeds whom, and who rubs whose back, if a person can't do it himself." The clown dreams of having his own home where he can raise children who have been deprived of common human joys.

Anarchist – human rights activist

In November of 1989, the 37-year-old resident of Irkutsk, **Yuri Padalko,** founded there the Public Agency for the Protection of Human Rights. Last year the executive committee of the city Soviet of people's deputies registered the agency as an officially existing organ, defending the interests of the people. Not long ago the executive committee of the Irkutsk Soviet cancelled this decision.

The idea of the agency is that people who suffer because of those in power, who are in need of help, whose rights have been transgressed by misuses or unlawful actions of authorities, should not just wait for someone to help them. They should on their own initiative jointly begin to defend their rights. Fighting together is easier.

The idea to start such an agency came to Padalko spontaneously, when the residents of one of the buildings that had been given over for major repair declared a hunger strike; the repairs were completed, but the people were not allowed to move back in – the building was given over to an office. After the hunger strike, Padalko set up a table in the city Soviet and began to try to "win over to his side" the people who came to the deputies with complaints. In the time of its existence, the public agency has successfully defended the rights of 18 people, and won 6 civil legal proceedings. They provided lawyers and psychiatrists and enlisted the support of the deputies of the regional Soviet.

But the agency has become involved in an unequal battle with the regional procurator's office, demanding an examination of the breaches of law by the Irkutsk procurator's office. After this the agency was closed. It is true that Yuri continues to work, considering the decision unlawful. He even thought about expanding the activities of the agency, founding on its basis a centre for social planning.

According to Padalko, the centre will help have-nots and invalids. But not through state structures. Instead, it will be with the help of the have-nots and the invalids themselves. since there is already support form the deputies of the region, this organization may be founded as half-state and half-public. For example, invalids may start their own enterprises, and the deputies will ensure privileged taxation for them. Smaller taxes will be ensured for those enterprises and organizations which cooperate with the centre for social planning. Of course there will be less income for the state treasury, but in return more social problems will be solved.

During his pre-election visit to Irkutsk, Alexander Rutskoy brought to the Irkutsk deputies the statute for the Fund for social development, worked out on Yeltsin's demand for the solution of the social problems of the population. When the statute was compared with the documents of the future centre it was discovered that the missions and plans of action of the two organizations were very similar, and in some areas the centre even advanced Yeltsin's initiatives.

FROM THE XXth CENTURY POLITICAL THOUGHT

Introduced by *New Times* analyst **Rostislav Zolotaryov**

"I was born in Leningrad at the corner of Nevsky Prospekt and the Moika canal, places that every Russian holds sacrosanct. While a line like: 'Our union, friend, is beautiful indeed!' (Pushkin) and some six notes, such as the spring theme from Tchaikovsky's *Snow Maiden* are for me the eternal song of youth." Boris Khazanov writes thus about himself. In the late 1940s, when in his last year in the Moscow University philology department, he was packed away to the Gulag. In 1955, after eight years in the Gulag, he came back and entered a medical institute. By the 1970s this writer and thinker, who published much in *Samizdat* and abroad as well, had gained quite a following amongst Moscow and emigre intellectuals. Harassed again by the KGB, he was obliged to emigrate and since 1982 has been living in Munich, where he works for the journal *Strana i Mir* (Land and World).

Though he discusses many things, he has an underlying leitmotif, that of the destiny of world culture, of Europe, of the human being in the 20th century, and especially of the human being in totalitarian society. Apparently he places the greatest emphasis on the destiny of Russia, which may be worded otherwise as "Russia, a destiny." Through his talent and originality he achieves the well-nigh impossible, transmuting the familiar and habitual into something dazzlingly and enchantingly new. Only one other man, I think, in Russian culture, possessed a similar talent. This was Konstantin Leontiev. "The Russia I adore is a platonic concept, which does not exist in nature. The Russia I see around myself is repulsive. Still, I could not bear to find myself wherever Russian is not spoken. The Russian language is for me my one and only country. I can live only in this invisible city," Boris Khazanov writes. The doctor Konstantin Leontiev would have shared these same sentiments were we to introduce "Russian Church and Byzantine Orthodoxy" in place of the Russian language.

Indeed, Russian culture has an amazing property. Whatever ignominy it may experience, it always has people with the "patent of nobility." Boris Khazanov indubitably holds one. He shields Russian culture from its desecrators in much the same way as German Jews defended German culture from the Nazis. In his essay *Unstamped Letters*, he describes the following World War II episode: when Rommel approached the borders of Palestine, the Jews originally from Germany living in one of its towns, prepared to defend themselves: they dug trenches and put up posters, implying that "Nazism will not pass. This town will remain German!"

Boris Khazanov, who turns 63 this year, has merited the proud yet burdensome acknowledgement: "May the devil take my soul, should I have no right to repeat what another man says in another land, for wherever I may be, there is the Russian language and Russian culture."

There follow excerpts from Boris Khazanov's writings of the 1970s and early 1980s incorporated in his book *Walking on Water.*"

The debility of despotism

Boris Khazanov

We are observing a truly apocalyptical spectacle: the subconscious of an entire nation is becoming its historical reality.

The catastrophies of Russian history are breakthroughs into a utopian past. The Russian state's ever-slow clock begins to tick away with extraordinary speed and the viscous historical time gives way to the frantic time of pipe dreaming. Russian history confuses the scholar, as it is least of all inclined to yield to appraisal in the spirit of Hegelian-Marxist historiography. Rather it should be recounted in mythological categories. The history of Russia's transformation into the USSR is recorded in Russian folklore as in a doomsday book. Thus, the heroic palladin Ilya of Murom, Russia's stupendous mass of inertia, stays immobile for 33 years in his parents' home, only then rises to saddle a horse as massive as he himself. Heroic adventures await him. This sudden jump from a vegetative existence to supernatural activity is equivalent to a time switch.

The time of the pipe dream is one of rallies and meetings, of pathetic vows, of the inspiring simplicity of vulgar slogans and geometric emblems, a time when ordinary life is out of question. It is a time of exhausted leaders brandishing bony fists and listening to the consenting response of the mob. It is a time of complete economic collapse, embezzlement, and feasting, reminiscent of "eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die"; in the midst of this ruination one perceives a procession of scarlet bunting, and interminable carnival parade, a heroic time of patrols, armbands, leather jackets, and creaking Sam Browne belts, a time of young men, a time of women who care nought for household chores. A certain dawn of renascence is heralded by the duststorms of civic troubles. It suddenly seems as if but one step remains to reach the horizon beyond which a radiant future lies. That future is seen not as the solution of social issues, but as their removal by means of universal well-being and human harmony. The old, worn-out, boring, benighted life is not to be patched up, but to be completely scrapped. In panicky haste towns are built and forests chopped down, rivers grow shallow, whole villages move out, the district goes to the region, the region to the capital, and soon all cities and towns are just appallingly overcrowded villages. The state machinery rotates madly, making mincemeat of the body of the nation. However, halfway towards the earthly paradise the giant is worn out, again petrified. And again nought but a mighty snores reach Europe's sentitive ear. Meanwhile a pipe-dreaming potential slowly amasses in the brain of the lethargic nation. Russia's culture is the giant's dreaming brain. Pipe-dreaming is its salient feature: it is imbued not with the light of intellect, but with the dull glimmer of national mythology. It is a culture stamped with a high degree of amateurism, which while preserving a well-nigh medieval integrity, at the same time emanates ideas for the future.

Philosophers have diversely explained the world, their belief that it should be remade. Yet it is not ideas, but material requirements that rule the world. To consume one must first produce. Which means the entire matter is one of the means of production, of who owns them, and of the relations of production. A society whose productive forces do not correspond to the relations of production is doomed, the sooner it collapses the better. Marxism emerged as a reaction to the idealism and smug complacency of the 19th century, as a summons to look the harsh truth of life square in the eye. However, in Russia there was no need to reveal this truth, as it hit the eye at every step. In Russia, metaphysics squatted in rags and extended a hand for alms. It sufficed to look beyond the gates of the first factory one came to, to see for oneself that the old man was right and that all else was nought but claptrap. Our concept of Marxism will be the least understandable were we to proclaim it a global evil. Would that mean everything opposed to it was good? However, it was on Russian soil that it quickly acquired mythological features.

Horror of the people is a feeling which the people themselves, let alone the top echelon, entertain

Rather should one say that it was in Russia that the Marxist teaching, couched within the scientifically positivist wrapping of mythology, revealed itself to shine like a sword drawn from its scabbard. The world wallowed in sin, worshipping mammon, and was enslaved by the rapacious bourgeoisie, the personification of history's worst. Then there came the chosen people, the Russian proletariat, the entire Russian nation in its broader sense, and a new Moses led them to the Promised Land. Like Moses, Lenin was not fated to see the end of this journey; his cause was continued by his loyal disciple, and with us we had our great Teaching and the sympathy of the world oppressed. Thus alternately, with the scraps of Judaeo-Christian mythology there emerged the new Russian utopia, which back in the 1920s enchanted the larger part of the population of the erstwhile Russian empire. One could trace how this pipe dream had become a state myth that served to fill the spiritual vacuum left after the 200-year-old Petrine myth, which before had filled the vacuum left by the Byzantine myth. One could trace the further evolution of this state myth by addressing oneself to a somewhat uncustomary field of knowledge, notably psychiatry, in short, take a trip through this hospital of history, to which entire nations are confined without hope of cure. We shall then see that in its development the myth goes through phases analogous to those of schizophrenic ravings. First comes the revolution, which may be likened to the acute psychosis of a psychiatric patient. This is a creative, productie phase. The delirium is continually enriched, acquiring greater detail and fanciful colouring, attaining something new with every passing day. The myth has yet to finalize. The second phase is one of stabilization, when the time of meetings and rallies ends, and the heroic epoch is gone. The myth acquires a state-ordered form. The patient resides within his self-concocted delirium, as if in his own home. Finally, we have the third phase, when the myth's creative potential is exhausted and the mythological regime has reached its zenith, at which point the sun blazes forth in full force, causing the immobile sentinels to fall into slumber and the flags to droop from their masts, and none wish to know the purpose for which the rallies were held, the clamour was raised, or the god to whom all genuflected. In the third phase the delirium loses its inner meaning, pales and disintegrates. Speech becomes disconnected, the patient no longer seeks to convince and mechanically echoes the same words over and over. This is the phase of the break-down of the individual.

The collapse of the pipe dream signifies not only the demise of the future for whose sake so much sacrifice was made, but also the death of the glorious past. The entire history of struggle and victory appears senseless. The hopes and pathos are fully discredited. The country's heroic youth assumes a criminal shadow. The civil war seems an absurd bloodbath. The very vocabulary of the 1920's appears as a monstrous mutilation of the language, as a linguistic catastrophe. Nowadays we find it easier to understand people who lived at the close of the 19th century than those who were so active during the chapter of the NEP and the first five-year plans. As generations alternate, the last protective barriers fall, and the gangrene of the future extends to the past, infecting at short order everything comprising the preserve of ideology, identified with the radiant forecast.

As for the Marxist-Leninist teaching, we mean here the theory that developed by the early 1920s; we tacitly put the sign of equality between this teaching and Soviet ideology. But that is not quite right, as this teaching is a kind of philosophiae perennis, and as such is not subject to improvement, inasmuch as it is perfect per se. Meanwhile ideology is obliged to be modified. Ideology's objective is to adapt the "bedrock" teaching to the current requirements, in other words, justify and sanctify party policy by means of the supreme sanctions of the one and only correct outlook and teaching. It must be admitted that over the decades ideology coped with this task brilliantly. The more it modified the teaching, the more persistently it swore faith. The most serious ideological shift occurred at the turn of the 1930's, when orthodox "proletarian internationalism" was complemented by Soviet patriotism, which, in turn, speedily assumed the shape of Russian empire nationalism, when construed anew was the revolution's basic fact that Bolshevist power had been the only factor capable of preserving the empire.

Though the marriage of Marxism-Leninism to Russian patriotism could have rejuvenated the debilitated "teaching," this did not take place. During the war, Marxist phraseology was simply discarded, and when restored, was no longer accepted otherwise than as phraseology. Khrushchev undertook the final attempt to reanimate the Communist faith. But today, when the generation that was at long last to climb to the shining heights is on its way out, ideology faces a new highly complex task, which is how to concert the truth of Marxism with the no longer obscured crippled economy.

It is usually said, and we too echoed it, that the totalitarian regime turns all its subjects into confederates. As for the Soviet regime, one may add that it has transformed all its subjects into spongers. All, it appears, are hangers-on. This imparts otherworld features to the state. Yet, it haunts us always: like God Almighty, who speaks through the mouths of his priests, it is everywhere, though nowhere to be seen. It is unattainable and omnipotent, and we all owe everything to it. Thus, the slogans of "we thank our own dear government," "we thank the party," and the like still have some meaning, as the state indeed feeds and clothes its subjects, foots the bill for their instruction and teaching, and generally graciously allows them to live, while, of course, ruthlessly slighting them. In this country, where every single person owes an unpaid debt to the country, implying the state, people are as helpless as babes. Their initiative is chaotically infantile and underground, and is always spearheaded against the state. Hence it is penalized. Anyone trying to cheat the state, that is attempting to start his own business, gets a rap on the knuckles. The vast majority of the population has been told not to be independent: they have been robbed of the need to realize common in-

terests, of the instincts of solidarity, and will not know what to do with freedom should it suddenly drop down on them like manna from Heaven. The Soviet citizen is perplexed by the hazy, distorted news of unrest in Poland: he is told that this is the product of a reactionary conspiracy against the Polish people and he is willing to believe that; he is indignant at the ingratitude of the Poles "for whose sake we shed our blood," yet feels envious and at any rate realizes that nothing of the sort could or should occur in Russia. His instinct is in a certain sense the reverse of the social one, telling them that without this state they will not be able to take a single step, that should it collapse, they will all become a milling mass of hopelessly confused and lost children.

Thus revealed is the deep-seated reason for the hopeless status quo, the purpose and meaning of the meaningless order, for it is not at all meaningless. Awareness of this ensures the firm stability of order, perhaps more reliably than the bureaucracy, the army, and the police. There existed one, it would appear, still exists the illusion that this order could be improved by softening or rationalizing it, but without modifying its substance: these are technocratic, economic or human rights, democratic dreams. But the gist of this order is that it cannot be reformed. Extricate just one brick, and the column will shake. Even if you want to replace this brick, the entire edifice will cave in.

Order is order. In this multinational country it prevents the bloodbath which the liberation movements on the fringes would lead to as soon as the bonds are slackened. In this archaic state, the only land empire at least in Europe and the Mediterranean if not the entire world that has survived to this day, any fracturing of the pillar on which this entire huge pyramid rests would signify for the vast multitude the loss of all means of subsistence, hunger, ruin and rapine across the endless orphaned territories. We sense the nearness of a rotten spring, just as we feel the approach of death and the helpless senility of this entire state national organism. This senility may be nought, but a lethal utopian potential writhing within the unknown depths of the collective unconscious as it draws near the danger limit. The lifetime of state formations akin to the Russian empire seems predetermined: indeed, the two Romes of the Occident and the Orient existed a thousand years each. The third Rome already entered the second millenium in the last century. How long will it drag on? Until a new pipe dream matures in the giant's lethargic brain?

The real tragedy is that in this country where static authority throttles eveyrthing that is live, bold and original, where the mediocre boss the gifted, where the old cramp the young, and where the dead rule the living, too many think this system is essential to prevent the release of the chaos inherent in hearts and minds. Everyone knows from individual but memorable instances what such chaos amounts to. Horror of the people is a feeling that the people themselves, let alone the top echelon, entertain.

You ask what I understand to be democracy. One could offer a very simle answer to the effect that democracy is the outer guarantee of freedom. However, now you will wonder what freedom is, and here one will need to go into a long involved explanation to the effect that the very definition of freedom incorporates a paradox: thus, if I say that freedom is what life cannot do without, you will object that a flipped coin could fall heads or tails as successfully, as it is free to decide what to do. Unnoticeably the question is reduced to freedom of choice and to the freedom of choosing the conditions for choice: the further we dig in, the more hopelessly we are embroiled in metaphysics, so perchance the best thing is to abandon the idea of a definition entirely. After all, in effect we really do not know what freedom and democracy are, do we? I for one do not know.

Democracy is that incredible opportunity to philosophize about freedom without fear of the Gulag

You would like to know what this fantastic thing democracy is and you ask me or us, in short those who have not an inkling of what it is like, who have as much a notion of it as of oysters and sliced pineapple in champagne. In some odd way, we see democracy, which if I am not mistaken, refers to the common folk – the demos, as an alien refinement, an aristocratic luxury. No wonder the term has no proper equivalent in Russian, because when translated as "popular rule," it is more reminiscent of arbitrary rule.

We shall have to revert to the founthead, to that great dead language which has receded like an ancient sea, leaving a scattering of shell-words in its wake. We pick them up and put them to our ear to hear the rumbling of the waves. "...tyranny is a terrible, vile misfortune that emerges when people cease to feel the need for a common law and right equal for all. Some think the cause is different, that people are robbed of freedom by virtue of a misunderstanding and without culpability, simply because they have been victimized by the tyrant. However, they err. As soon as the need for common law and rights for all vanish from the heart of the nation, an individual replaces law and right. No wonder some fail to notice tyranny even when it has already dawned." This voice is nameless. The quotation has come down to us as a quotation from the writings of an anonymous fifth-century moralist, a contemporary of Thucydides if not Thucydides himself. But does it really matter from whom it was borrowed? In effect, it says everything that needs to be said. Note that implied is democracy even though it is not mentioned at all.

"Tyranny that vile misfortune." I was seventeen when I first saw this quotation in a book during the first postwar year and at the best time of my life. It suddenly dawned on me that this was said about us, that the most incorrigible anti-Sovieteer could not have put it better. He who lives in a despotic state is himself to blame, as he is of a people who are to blame for it. A vile misfortune is vile because it has become a normal way of life. For that reason the despot's subjects fail to see that they are abused by a nonentity: they fail to recognize the tyranny for what it is in the same way as deep-sea fish fail to sense the pressure of the layers of water above them and do not suffer from the darkness. Should they have occasion to learn of another world, they can discuss it only by applying the qualifications of their own underwater world. That is why we may define democracy only from its negative standpoint as something we do not have, in roughly the same way as Schopenhauer defines human happiness as when there is no unhappiness.

You want to know what democracy is? Alright, I shall tell you. Democracy is that incredible opportunity for philosophizing about it without fearing the Gulag. Democracy is a society which gets along without a Gulag. Democracy is a society where authorities are ridiculed, holy cows are not revered, portraits are not worshipped, plaster-cast idols are not deified, slogans are not chanted in chorus, people do not march in step, rejoice according to a timetable, or blow their noses by order. This is a society wherein one enjoys the special pleasure of questioning all the institutions and may always wonder whether it justifies its signboards, a society whose astounding peculiarity is that it does not encourge reporting people, does not elevate the mediocrity, does not harass originality, does not penalize talent, and does not view humour as a state crime, and notwithstanding continues to live on by some miracle. Democracy is a little Greece, which rallies 300 fighting men who shield it from the savage hordes, a tiny ship of France which rocks on the waves and does not sink. Democracy is a hero in clown's garb, the ashes of whose father beat in his heart, which nobody knows about. Democracy is a palace, where sits a king who has pinned on to his chest a yellow six-pointed star and nothing can be done to that silly king. Democracy is what we have not reached and will never reach, as the age of growth is long past. Democracy is youth, while tyranny is vile debility.

Compiled by Yuri Pivovarov, Cand.Sc. (Hist.)

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